



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

CHAIRMAN

April 22, 2004

The Honorable Sue W. Kelly  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Kelly:

On behalf of the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of March 9, 2004, regarding electrical cable separation issues at the Indian Point 2 nuclear power plant in Buchanan, New York. In your letter, you expressed concern about electrical cabling issues recently raised by a former Entergy employee and requested that the NRC conduct a comprehensive investigation into the matter.

As you are aware, the NRC has maintained a heightened level of regulatory oversight at Indian Point over the past several years in response to various performance issues. This heightened oversight includes four full-time onsite resident inspectors, as well as region-based inspections well above the baseline program. Additionally, a technical coordination group, made-up of representatives from NRC Region I and headquarters, has provided direct oversight of technical issues and events at Indian Point. Inspection results have been closely monitored to ensure proper risk assessments were conducted and appropriate management attention was focused on performance issues or trends.

Prior to the purchase of Indian Point 2 by Entergy, Consolidated Edison had initiated a Design Basis Initiative (DBI) to improve the overall management and control of the facility's original design basis. Since the transfer, Entergy has committed significant resources over five years to continue this effort. NRC has closely monitored and inspected Entergy's improvement effort and independently verified selected DBI outputs. The cable separation issue reported by Entergy on February 7, 2003, and referenced in your letter, was identified during a DBI effort to validate the plant's conformance with fire protection requirements. Through this effort, Entergy identified problems with the routing of power cables for the charging pumps and, subsequently, the service water pumps. An inspection of Entergy's immediate actions to address these issues concluded that appropriate compensatory measures were in place, pending final resolution of the technical issues and an assessment of their safety significance. Enclosed is a copy of the relevant NRC inspection report. The cable separation issue is discussed on page four. Further NRC review of these cable separation issues will be completed as part of the ongoing triennial fire protection inspection for Indian Point 2.

In accordance with our established allegation program, the NRC initiated a review of the electrical cable issues raised by the former Entergy employee. The NRC staff requested that Entergy complete a formal review of these issues by April 16, 2004. During the week of March 15, 2004, NRC inspectors were at Indian Point Unit 2 to review Entergy's initial work to verify the continued operability of safety systems and to perform an independent assessment of the potential significance of the issues raised by the former employee. The staff determined that Entergy has an appropriate basis to conclude there are no immediate safety issues.

Entergy also added a separate DBI effort to further examine cable separation at Indian Point 2. The NRC continues to assess the scope and depth of Entergy's review, as well as their progress on the cable separation DBI through additional on-site inspection. As requested, we will provide you any future NRC inspection reports that address these issues.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

*/RA/*

Edward McGaffigan, Jr.  
Acting Chairman

Enclosure: Inspection Report

