

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 08/04/04

EDO CONTROL: G20040501
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FINAL REPLY:

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton

TO:

Chairman Diaz

FOR SIGNATURE OF :

** PRI **

CRC NO: 04-0474

Chairman Diaz

DESC:

Emergency Responders in Westchester County,
New York

ROUTING:

Reyes
Norry
Virgilio
Kane
Collins
Dean
Burns/Cyr
Miller, RI
Dyer, NRR

DATE: 07/26/04

ASSIGNED TO:

CONTACT:

NSIR

Zimmerman

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

Template: SECY-017

E-RIDS: SECY-01

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

NEW YORK
SENATOR

RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
SUITE 476
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3204
202-224-4451

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3204

July 13, 2004

Nils J. Diaz, Ph.D.
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Dr. Diaz:

It is with great concern that I write to you regarding a serious problem facing the emergency first responders in Westchester County, New York. Westchester County's emergency responders are hindered by the fact that they have an insufficient number of radio frequencies in order to communicate effectively in the event a major emergency. Currently interference from other emergency channels in neighboring areas has prevented Westchester's upgrades to their emergency communications infrastructure to be fully realized. Westchester has 38 independent police departments, 59 independent fire departments, 43 independent emergency medical services corps and 13 hospitals. The current frequency problems plaguing Westchester have ensured that radio interoperability among these agencies is virtually non-existent.

While this situation already poses many challenges to the emergency response needs of Westchester's 950,000 residents, you are undoubtedly aware that Westchester County faces unique security concerns given the location within its borders of the Indian Point nuclear power plant and several major reservoirs that provide a significant portion of New York City's water supply. Indeed, in the event of any catastrophic incident at the power plant or sabotage at one of the reservoirs, the ability of Westchester's first responders to effectively communicate would be severely limited due to the interference it receives on its emergency frequencies.

In light of the tragedy of September 11th, it is clear that the types of systematic communications failures that plagued the emergency response efforts of New York City's valiant firefighters and police officers, as outlined in the September 11th Commission's report, cannot be tolerated. In fact, we have an exceptional opportunity to prevent the same types of breakdowns by addressing the current dilemma facing Westchester:

In your capacity as Chairman of the Federal agency charged with protecting the public against the radiation from nuclear reactors, your insight as to what the consequences of ignoring the frequency problems in Westchester, within the context of an incident at the Indian Point power plant, would be helpful in moving this issue forward. Given the gravity of this matter, it is my hope that our offices may work together in order to achieve an expeditious resolution. I have instructed my office to contact your staff within the next week in an effort to begin addressing all of the issues involved.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Hillary Rodham Clinton