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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3204

May 26, 2005

CHAIRMAN REC'D
05 JUN -2 AM 9:35

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

Dear Dr. Diaz:

I write to request a meeting with you to discuss an important nuclear plant security issue.

As you know, I have taken a very active interest in security and emergency preparedness at Indian Point and other plants in New York. I was disturbed to learn recently that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) had rejected a public petition filed by local governments and citizen groups, including several groups from New York.

The petition asked the NRC to require all nuclear plants to equip emergency notification sirens with backup power sources independent from the electrical grid, so that in the event of an accident or an act of terrorism accompanied by a loss of power the public could still be promptly notified of a radiological emergency. My understanding is that of the 62 commercial reactor sites that use sirens as warning systems, 27% have backup power for all sirens, 33% percent for some of the sirens and 40% have no backup at all. Indian Point has no backup power for its sirens, and I understand that none of the other New York plants have backup power for their sirens either.

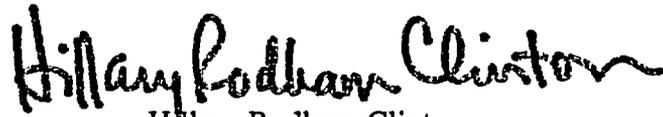
This decision defies common sense. In the event of a successful attack on a nuclear plant, it seems obvious that disruptions of the grid in surrounding areas are a possible if not likely outcome. What good are emergency sirens if they are not going to sound in the event of an attack?

In your response to the petition, you include several justifications for your decision. One is that the petition was improperly filed. In addition, you suggest that this is perhaps a responsibility of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and not the NRC. In my view, none of these answers is satisfactory. The NRC issues the operating licenses for our commercial reactors, and it is the responsibility of the NRC to make certain that emergency response plans work at Indian Point and other nuclear power plants across the country.

I urge you to reconsider and change your decision. If we need to change the law to make this happen, then I will work with you and my colleagues to see that appropriate legislation is

expeditiously introduced in the United States Senate. I look forward to meeting with you shortly to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely yours,


Hillary Rodham Clinton