

November 1, 2005

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 September 6, 2005, regarding emergency preparedness for the Indian Point nuclear power plant and the Federal government's ability to work quickly and effectively with State and local governments in response to a serious disaster, such as Hurricane Katrina.

Your letter requested that the NRC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) meet with State and local officials to discuss emergency preparedness issues in the Hudson Valley. In consideration of your request for a meeting with the NRC and similar requests from other officials, the NRC supported and participated in a meeting on September 8, 2005, in Hawthorne, New York, that was chaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The meeting was attended by representatives from the four counties in the Indian Point emergency planning zone, along with a member of your staff. The focus of this meeting was a discussion of Indian Point emergency preparedness issues and the DHS comprehensive review.

The NRC has sponsored and participated in previous meetings with representatives of governmental organizations from the communities surrounding Indian Point, such as the meeting on safety, security, and emergency preparedness that was held on December 16, 2004, in Briarcliff Manor, New York. The NRC is also conducting an additional review of its emergency preparedness and response programs and held a public meeting to solicit stakeholder input on its programs last month at NRC headquarters offices. At the NRC's invitation, New York State and Westchester county officials attended this meeting.

Federal agencies continue to be engaged in high priority activities in response to the recent hurricanes. The NRC took aggressive and appropriate steps to prepare for these hurricanes, in accordance with established emergency plans and procedures. The NRC coordinated extensively with other Federal, State, and local agencies in order to ensure communication among emergency response organizations. The NRC believes that established procedures of the NRC, its Agreement States, and its licensees proved effective during these hurricanes.

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I want to assure you that the NRC will continue to exercise strong oversight of our licensees to ensure that they are prepared for both natural and man-made emergencies. The NRC will take action to identify lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina and other hurricanes to improve hurricane procedures and processes, as we have done after previous hurricanes. The NRC will continue to work with our licensees and other Federal, State, and local agencies to protect public health and safety.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Nils J. Diaz