

December 7, 2005

Mr. Alex Matthiessen
Hudson Riverkeeper and President
Riverkeeper, Inc.
828 South Broadway
Tarrytown, NY 10591

Dear Mr. Matthiessen:

I am responding to your letter of November 8, 2005, to Nils J. Diaz, Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), in which you expressed concerns about the NRC's notification of meetings that are open to the public for observation and participation. In particular, you asserted that the public notification for the NRC meeting held on November 16, 2005, with Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. to discuss implementation of backup power for the Indian Point alert and notification system did not properly notify the public in a timely manner.

The NRC views nuclear regulation as the public's business, and as such, it must be transacted openly and candidly. The goal to ensure openness explicitly recognizes that the public must be informed about, and have a reasonable opportunity to participate meaningfully in, the regulatory process. The NRC firmly believes that transparency in its communications and early and meaningful public involvement in the regulatory process is critical.

The NRC maintains an extensive Web site (www.nrc.gov) to inform the public of our activities. The NRC primarily announces meetings that are open to the public on our Public Meetings Schedule page at this Web site. A member of the public can view the list of all scheduled meetings or perform a search for meetings using specific criteria. The NRC staff endeavors to post its meeting notices on the NRC Web site as soon as practicable after firm meeting arrangements have been made. This posting generally occurs about 10 calendar days prior to the meeting. Furthermore, the staff may elect, based on the amount of public interest or whether the meeting is expected to be particularly controversial, to issue a press release or purchase a newspaper advertisement when there is a particular need to inform local citizens.

The NRC staff issued its notice of the November 16th meeting on October 4, 2005. On November 7, 2005, the staff issued a press release announcing that it would be meeting with representatives of the Indian Point Nuclear Plant on November 16, 2005, to discuss the portion of the 2005 Energy Policy Act involving the facility's Alert and Notification System and corrective actions aimed at improving the reliability of the current system. A reference to this press release was also posted on the main NRC Web page. In your letter, you also stated that you first saw a reference to the November 16th meeting on the NRC's Web page concerning current plant-specific issues related to Indian Point. You also acknowledged that the meeting notice for the November 16th meeting was published on the Public Meetings Schedule page on October 4th.

The NRC was aware of the public interest in issues associated with the Indian Point site and took this into consideration in scheduling and announcing the November 16th meeting with ample advance notice. The meeting was also scheduled during the evening to accommodate members of the public who could not participate in a daytime meeting. In addition, the NRC

press release on November 7, 2005, to the local media resulted in newspaper articles in *The Journal News* on November 13 and 16, 2005, that provided information on the location, time and subject of the meeting. Although the NRC reviews written requests for addition to plant-specific mailing lists, I have decided to add Riverkeeper to the NRC Headquarters mailing list for Indian Point based on your November 8th letter and your organization's continued interest in this facility.

I appreciate your interest in this matter, and I hope that this letter addresses your concerns.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard J. Laufer, Chief
Plant Licensing Branch I-1
Division of Operating Reactor Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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