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**Date:** 3/8/06 9:55AM  
**Subject:** FW: Nuclear safety review pushed

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Kathy

Nuclear safety review pushed

By GREG CLARY  
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(Original publication: March 8, 2006)

Five area congressional representatives want federal regulators to conduct an independent safety review of Indian Point and are pushing legislation in Washington to require the additional oversight.

"Indian Point is not functioning properly, and the health of area residents and the integrity of the environment are being compromised," Rep. Maurice Hinchey, D-Middletown, said in a statement announcing the bill he introduced yesterday.

Joining Hinchey in the effort to force the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to ratchet up its oversight of the plant are two Democrats, Reps. Nita Lowey and Eliot Engel, and two Republicans, Rep. Sue Kelly and Connecticut's Rep. Christopher Shays. All are original co-sponsors of the bill.

Entergy officials disagreed with Hinchey's evaluation of the plants' operations and said the legislation wasn't warranted. Two radioactive isotopes have shown up in underground water at the Buchanan site since a leak began last summer from a spent fuel pool, and the elected officials maintain that the NRC must ensure that safety issues are addressed in a formal manner.

"An Independent Safety Assessment is the most comprehensive and guaranteed way to evaluate current problems and identify other potential problems at Indian Point," Kelly said. "As I made clear to the NRC in my written request for an ISA last month, the agency must better demonstrate that the safety of our local communities surrounding the plant is its foremost priority."

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The legislation, if passed, would force the NRC to report its findings on the safety of Indian Point no later than six months from the day the measure is signed into law.

It would also require an in-depth assessment of the design, construction, maintenance and operational safety performance of Indian Point and a comprehensive evaluation of the emergency evacuation plan for the nuclear power plant in the event of a terrorist attack or radiological accident.

The NRC on Saturday posted an annual assessment letter for the plants' 2005 operations, noting an Indian Point 2 nitrogen leak as its main reason for the second highest rating while Indian Point 3 got the highest rating. Overall, the agency said the nuclear plants "operated in a manner that preserved public health and safety."

Indian Point spokesman Jim Steets said the elected officials were pushing for more regulation than is needed.

"Entergy has repeatedly demonstrated that it meets or exceeds safety and security regulations at Indian Point in several comprehensive assessments conducted by federal and local agencies," Steets said. "New York residents would be better served if these elected officials actually read the assessments, rather than waste tax dollars on new unwarranted assessments to mollify the extreme elements of their constituencies that oppose nuclear power."

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