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September 28, 2007

Chief
Rules and Directives Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Office of Administration
Mailstop T-6D59
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

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RULES AND DIRECTIVES
BRANCH
USNRC

Re: Federal Register: August 10, 2007
Volume 72, Number 154
Page 45075-45076
Indian Point Nuclear Generating
Station, Unit Nos. 2 and 3


To Whom It May Concern:

Please add my name to the long, long list of those opposed to the relicensing of this facility.

The obvious reasons have been stated repeatedly by many people and many times: lack of ability to perform adequate evacuation procedures; abominable safety record at this facility, as well as the environmental contamination caused by "accidents" at this facility.

Perhaps we are ostriches. Perhaps we choose to forget that our nation's nuclear power plants have been identified as potential terror targets, by the terrorists. Does it take a disaster to bring about the closure of this facility in such a developed area, with the potential for such a huge loss of life? Enough!

Very truly yours,



Kathleen Vorwick

cc: Hon. Eliot Spitzer, Governor, NYS
Hon. Charles Schumer, US Senator
Hon. Hillary Clinton, US Senator
Hon. Vito Fossella, Congressman

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Staten Island Advance

The top terror target

Saturday, September 22, 2007

Don't think Staten Islanders have no big stake in the safety of the Indian Point nuclear power plants. Their location —on the Hudson River over 50 miles to our north — isn't as remote as it seems.

We're among up to 20 million people in our tri-state area who could be threatened by a disastrous accident or attack at the nuclear facility.

A terrorist blow to Indian Point might cause an estimated 44,000 deaths immediately and half a million later on from the relentless effects of radiation. That would dwarf the toll of the Sept. 11 tragedy.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission views Indian Point, a 2,000-megawatt facility that supplies nearly a quarter of the power used in the metropolitan area, as a high-risk operation. According to a top Department of Homeland Security official, the NRC has ranked the facility "in terms of potential human consequences as the No. 1 site in the nation." Which is by no means a secret.

Nor is the fact that plans for U.S. nuclear plants were found in al-Qaida hideouts during the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

So state and local officials are justly seeking a stricter and more wide-ranging federal review than usual now that the owner of Indian Point's two reactors is seeking to renew its license.

Entergy Nuclear Northeast, a \$10-billion firm based in New Orleans, operates the 33-year-old Unit 2 and 31-year-old Unit 3. Their licenses expire in 2013 and 2015. Key question: Can the aging facility remain safe for a couple of decades more?

The NRC has just held a public hearing near the Buchanan, N.Y., power station on its environmental impact. Comments on the issue are being accepted until Oct. 12. A final environmental report is to be issued in early 2009. But there is no reason to overlook any of the chronic safety and security questions having to do with operations at Indian Point.

For example, the NRC only days ago had to suspend an inspection at Indian Point 3.

Why? Plant officials weren't ready to answer questions about a burst of unplanned shutdowns that had led the agency to lower the atomic reactor's safety rating.

An explosion and fire on April 6 forced Entergy to unexpectedly shut down the reactor for the second time in four days and the fourth time in less than a year.

Beyond that, a new \$15-million system of warning sirens for those living near Indian Point missed three deployment deadlines. The 155 sirens, which would alert residents within 10 miles of the facility to any emergency, have yet to be fully tested and approved.

It took Entergy two years to install the system from the time it agreed to do so. According to the NRC, the initial test failures indicated "insufficient management attention at senior levels." A red flag, obviously.

Speaking of not paying attention, an armed guard at Indian Point recently was discovered sleeping at an inner security gate. An NRC inspector found the guard asleep only minutes after beginning an afternoon watch at the post. A small mistake? Perhaps. But it adds to a long list of concerns.

Even so, it seems likely at this point that the NRC will OK the request to renew Indian Point's operating license.

Nationwide, almost 50 nuclear power units have gained renewals so far; none has ever been rejected. Owners don't ask to keep operating plants that are in bad shape and aren't worth fixing.

Nuclear power stations are costly to build but relatively cheap to run. The newest U.S. nuclear plant, at Watts Bar in Tennessee, began to operate 1996 after taking 23 years to build at a cost of \$6.9 billion. But a typical American nuclear facility now operates 90 percent of the time, up from less than 50 percent in the 1970s. No wonder Entergy wants to keep going.

There has never been a disastrous release of radiation in the United States or any other Western country. A near miss took place at Three Mile Island, outside Harrisburg, Pa., in 1979.

In Ukraine, the Chernobyl reactor became unstable in 1986 and radioactive material escaped following an explosion. The radiation deaths may ultimately reach 4,000.

There have been lesser scares elsewhere, including, most recently, Japan, where an earthquake caused small leaks from a nuclear reactor.

All the more reason for full government scrutiny now at Indian Point -- the danger of terrorism, notwithstanding.

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