

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Eliot Engel
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Engel:

I am responding to your letter of March 6, 2009, to Mr. Eric Leeds of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in which you expressed concern with a water leak that developed in a pipe connected to the condensate storage tank (CST) at Indian Point Unit 2. Specifically, you questioned whether the Indian Point Energy Center has a program to prevent and detect such deterioration in the future. You were also concerned with the amount of information made available to the public about the leak.

On February 16, 2009, Entergy personnel identified leakage in a buried section of piping associated with the Unit 2 CST return line. The leakage was observed during routine operator rounds which are intended to detect anomalous conditions. On February 21, 2009, following excavation, Entergy personnel replaced the affected pipe section. The leakage source was determined to be a 1.5 inch diameter corrosion hole in the buried section of piping.

Throughout this period, NRC inspectors observed plant activities to provide an independent assessment that Entergy made the repairs safely. Specifically, NRC inspectors determined that Entergy personnel identified the source of the leak, sampled the leak to confirm expected trace levels of tritium contamination, maintained a source of water available to pumps that draw water from the CST, and replaced the pipe within the time frame required by the operating license. NRC inspectors also assessed the environmental impact of the leak and determined that the release was well below NRC regulatory limits for liquid effluents. As an added perspective, while the CST contents are not drinking water, the tritium concentration was also well below the Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water limits.

The condensate system pipe in which the leak occurred falls within the scope of the license renewal rule in the regulations. Entergy has proposed a buried piping and tanks inspection program in its License Renewal Application for Indian Point. Should a renewed license be granted, the management of aging effects during the period of extended operation would be required and addressed as part of this proposed program.

The NRC supports the public's need to be kept informed of safety issues at the plant. Although this specific leak did not meet regulatory requirements for formal notification to the NRC, the NRC Resident Inspectors were notified promptly. On February 17, 2009, the NRC proactively communicated the issue via a telephone conference call to interested Federal, State, and local government officials and staff members. Upon completion of Entergy's pipe replacement activities, the NRC also communicated a status update via email as a follow-up to the phone conference. The NRC is aware that Entergy communicated the issue to key external parties; however, the timing and content of Entergy's communications related to the leak would be best addressed by Entergy directly as such communications were voluntary.

E. Engel

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NRC inspectors will continue to observe and evaluate Entergy's follow-up actions to determine the causes of the pipe corrosion and to identify other locations where such leakage could occur. The results of the reviews and inspections will be documented in NRC inspection reports that will be available to the public upon completion. NRC will ensure that copies of the inspection reports documenting Entergy's performance in this matter are shared with you and your staff. If you have further questions or need additional information in this matter, please contact Rebecca L. Schmidt, Director, Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

/RA/

R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director
for Operations

E. Engel

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Sincerely,

/RA/

R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director
for Operations

Identical Letters Sent to: The Honorable Eliot Engel, The Honorable John Hall, The Honorable Nita Lowey and The Honorable Maurice Hinchey.

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SUNSI Review Complete: RSB (Reviewer's Initials)

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April 3, 2009

The Honorable John Hall
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hall:

I am responding to your letter of March 6, 2009, to Mr. Eric Leeds of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in which you expressed concern with a water leak that developed in a pipe connected to the condensate storage tank (CST) at Indian Point Unit 2. Specifically, you questioned whether the Indian Point Energy Center has a program to prevent and detect such deterioration in the future. You were also concerned with the amount of information made available to the public about the leak.

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Throughout this period, NRC inspectors observed plant activities to provide an independent assessment that Entergy made the repairs safely. Specifically, NRC inspectors determined that Entergy personnel identified the source of the leak, sampled the leak to confirm expected trace levels of tritium contamination, maintained a source of water available to pumps that draw water from the CST, and replaced the pipe within the time frame required by the operating license. NRC inspectors also assessed the environmental impact of the leak and determined that the release was well below NRC regulatory limits for liquid effluents. As an added perspective, while the CST contents are not drinking water, the tritium concentration was also well below the Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water limits.

The condensate system pipe in which the leak occurred falls within the scope of the license renewal rule in the regulations. Entergy has proposed a buried piping and tanks inspection program in its License Renewal Application for Indian Point. Should a renewed license be granted, the management of aging effects during the period of extended operation would be required and addressed as part of this proposed program.

The NRC supports the public's need to be kept informed of safety issues at the plant. Although this specific leak did not meet regulatory requirements for formal notification to the NRC, the NRC Resident Inspectors were notified promptly. On February 17, 2009, the NRC proactively communicated the issue via a telephone conference call to interested Federal, State, and local government officials and staff members. Upon completion of Entergy's pipe replacement activities, the NRC also communicated a status update via email as a follow-up to the phone conference. The NRC is aware that Entergy communicated the issue to key external parties; however, the timing and content of Entergy's communications related to the leak would be best addressed by Entergy directly as such communications were voluntary.

J. Hall

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Sincerely,

/RA/

R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director
for Operations

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Nita Lowey
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lowey:

I am responding to your letter of March 6, 2009, to Mr. Eric Leeds of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) in which you expressed concern with a water leak that developed in a pipe connected to the condensate storage tank (CST) at Indian Point Unit 2. Specifically, you questioned whether the Indian Point Energy Center has a program to prevent and detect such deterioration in the future. You were also concerned with the amount of information made available to the public about the leak.

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N. Lowey

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R. W. Borchardt
Executive Director
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April 3, 2009

The Honorable Maurice Hinchey
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hinchey:

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M. Hinchey

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