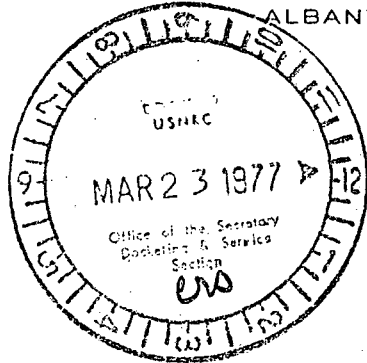




THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY 12224

SENATOR
BERNARD G. GORDON
37TH DISTRICT
CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY



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March 9, 1977

Honorable Samuel W. Jensch
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

RE: Indian Point, Buchanan, New York

Dear Chairman Jensch:

Since the earliest hearings you have held concerning the preferred type of closed cycle cooling system at the Indian Point atomic power plants in Westchester County, I have argued that any insistence on natural draft cooling towers is wrong and ill-conceived.

In earlier testimony I criticized the environmental impact statements prepared by your staff and Con Edison, as they appeared to minimize the potential adverse economic, aesthetic and environmental impacts these towers would have on an area within a 15 mile radius of these plants.

Data has now become available which clearly exposes the shortcomings of these statements, on which your board relied in finding cooling towers to be the preferred alternative. First, I enclose a recent article from the New York Times indicating that the United States Corps of Engineers is advancing a project which could use Hudson River water to supply New York City and Nassau County. Their proposal would take as many as 950 million gallons of water a day from the river upstream from the Con Ed plants, for use by the New York Metropolitan area. Unquestionably, this withdrawal of water upstream would increase the salinity level of the water at the Indian Point estuary, increasing the salt drift which would be deposited from the cooling towers. This would completely change the environmental impact as analyzed in the studies provided by your staff and Con Ed.

Second, a recent article has indicated that Peekskill Bay is one of the areas of highest concentration of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) in the Hudson River. The concentrations are greatly higher than those anticipated. Your environmental impact records did not even consider the adverse environmental impact of airborne PCB's which would inevitably be discharged through the Indian Point cooling towers.

In light of these two critical environmental factors, which were never even

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considered during your hearings, it would be irresponsible to not reopen the question of closed cycle systems at Indian Point. New studies are required to determine the environmental impact of these two undiscussed elements. Failure to do this would certainly be imprudent, and probably illegal as well.

I anxiously await your prompt response, as no single issue is of greater immediate importance to the people of the Hudson River Valley.

Respectfully submitted,



BERNARD G. GORDON

BGG/h
Encl.

U.S. Would Pay \$4.6 Billion to Tap Hudson for New York and Nassau

By HAROLD FABER
Special to The New York Times

ALBANY, March 5—A \$4.6 billion project to provide drinking water from the Hudson River for New York City and Nassau County has been recommended by the Army Corps of Engineers.

By the year 2000, if nothing is done

to provide more water, the area will face a water shortage of 390 million gallons a day, according to the Federal estimates, even if controversial water conservation measures such as metering are implemented. The shortage was put at 500 million gallons a day if conservation measures are not put into effect.

If adopted, the new project would be planned, financed and constructed by the Federal Government, with a regional body, as yet undesignated, collecting user taxes when it is completed to repay the cost of construction.

No money would be expended by the city or the state, neither of which can afford it. Moreover, the city may even save millions of dollars, because the plan envisages taking over completion of the massive City Water Tunnel No. 3, now all but halted because of a lack of funds.

If the plan is not adopted, the result would be loss of jobs and income in the city and further damage to its financial stability, as well as insufficient water, the engineers warned. Their proposal and a draft environmental impact statement are now being circulated among public officials in the region.

At a time of fiscal emergency in the city and sharp cutbacks in state programs, city and state officials express support for the Federal initiative.

A state task force, headed by Peter A. A. Berie, Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, has been appointed to develop a policy on the construction and operation of a regional water supply

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U.S. Proposes Tapping Hudson to Provide Water Supply to New York City and Nassau

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for southeastern New York, and already has been meeting with the Army Engineers.

The next step in the long process of considering the Federal plan will be taken on March 29, when a public hearing will be held at 1 P.M. in the offices of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at 65 Liberty Street in New York City.

After that, the proposal will go to Governor Carey for his approval and then to the Chief of Engineers in Washington, who will make a recommendation to Congress for authorization and money.

One major obstacle may be the Carter Administration's position on massive new public works projects. Only last week, the Administration suspended the financing of 19 water-control projects in the West, where the drought is immediate and severe.

Congress Approval Needed

If approved by Congress, the engineers estimated that it would take at least 13 years—five more years for planning and eight years for construction—to complete the project. Other water officials said a more realistic estimate was that it would probably be 20 years before any New Yorker started to drink Hudson River water, if the plan is approved.

The Federal Government got involved in New York's problem as a result of the drought of the 1960's, when severe restrictions were imposed on the use of water in the metropolitan area. In 1965, Congress authorized the Army to prepare plans to meet the long-term water needs of the Northeast.

Despite the regional character of its mandate, the Army Engineers considered only the needs of southeastern New York State because both Connecticut and New Jersey are developing their own water supply programs for the future.

Nassau County was included because of its need to turn to the New York City's water supply at the turn of the century, the report said. It also said that Rockland County, because of its anticipated growth, would need more water from the same supply, too.

In addition, four other Hudson Valley Counties are involved. Many communities

in Westchester County already are tapping into the New York City water supply, and small amounts are going to users in Orange, Ulster and Putnam Counties.

After considering more than 100 different new water sources, ranging from the Great Lakes to Long Island groundwater, the engineers narrowed down the practical supply of more drinking water to the Hudson River in the mid-Hudson Valley above the saline barrier—the point where the tidal salt water meets the river's fresh supply.

Water—as much as 950 million gallons a day—would be diverted from the river when demands are high upon the existing reservoir supply, thus permitting the reservoirs to replenish themselves. When insufficient water is available in the river for diversion, the reservoirs would be used to meet the entire demand of the system.

Operation of the system would require that water be diverted from the Hudson River for delivery to users in the metropolitan area only when it becomes necessary to maintain storages in existing reservoirs above pre-determined levels or when demands exceeded the capacity of the existing system to deliver the water," the report said.

Purification Plant Planned

The engineers concluded that the Hudson River water, suitably treated, would be potable, with no danger from sewage, polychlorinated hydrocarbons or polychlorinated biphenols (PCB's), despite the current controversy about the high PCB levels in the river.

The report pointed out that four mid-Hudson communities—Port Ewen, Highland, Rhinebeck and Poughkeepsie—already used river water for drinking without ill effects.

Under the proposal, water would be skimmed off the Hudson river near Esopus in Ulster County on the west bank of the river about 85 miles north of the Battery. It would then be pumped 14 miles to a giant new purification plant at Modena, also in Ulster County.

From there, the water would be pumped through a huge tunnel, 16 feet in diameter and 53 miles long, to the Spring Valley area of Rockland County, and then

under the Hudson River to the Kensico Reservoir in Westchester County.

At Kensico, the Hudson River water would be intermingled with the normal water supplies from the Catskill and Croton Reservoirs, and flow down to the city. Under the plan, City Tunnel No. 3 would be completed and extended 13 miles into Nassau County.

Two other routes were seriously considered. One would have taken the water in the vicinity of Rhinebeck on the East bank, treated it there and then conveyed it to the Kensico Reservoir. The other would have utilized the Esopus intake and the Modena plant on the west bank, but would have crossed the Hudson near West Point en route to Kensico.

Costs Are Estimated

But the Spring Valley route was selected, according to the Army Engineers, because it could most economically provide regional water to Rockland County, as well as providing for New York City's and Nassau's needs, and would be closer to more growth areas in Orange County than other routes.

In its financial analysis, the engineers said that it would cost about \$402 million to construct the intake, pumping and treatment stations, \$954 million for the tunnels above Kensico Reservoir and \$2.3 billion for tunnels into New York City and Nassau County—a total of about \$3.7 billion. Interest payments during construction would be \$940 million more, for a total cost of \$4.6 billion.

The report and the environmental impact statement added, "The project as conceived and described will not adversely affect the social, terrestrial or aquatic environments of the Hudson to any significant extent."

That conclusion is certain to be disputed by local environmental groups, who already have expressed concern about the amount of Hudson River water that would have to be used in proposed atomic energy plants in the mid-Hudson Valley using cooling towers.

