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July 7, 1997

RULES & DIR. BRANCH
US NRC

Re: Indian Point Unit No. 2
Docket No. 50-247

Chief, Rules and Directive Branch
Division of Administrative Services,
Office of Administration
US Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555

SUBJECT: NUREG - 1606 : Proposed Regulatory Guidance Related to
Implementation of 10 CFR 50.59 (Changes, Test or Experiments)

Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Edison), as owner and operator of Indian Point Unit No. 2 nuclear generating station, is pleased to provide comments on the subject proposed guidance as published in the Federal Register, 62 Fed. Reg. 24997 - May 7, 1997.

Con Edison endorses the comments submitted by the Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) in its July 7, 1997 letter on this matter. We are concerned that NRC attempts to clarify the scope of 10 CFR 50.59 should properly consider the entire rule in the context of its historical application, recognizing the validity of current interpretation and implementation. EPRI guidance on implementation of 10 CFR 50.59 has proven to be a valuable and effective tool in meeting NRC regulatory requirements. Indeed, in implementing the requirements of 10 CFR 50.59 at Indian Point Station, we have incorporated this guidance, provided in NSAC-125 "Guidelines for 10 CFR 50.59 Safety Evaluations," because we believe it represents a generally sound process. We support the ongoing efforts of NEI to enhance this guidance document, as reflected in Draft NEI 96-07.

From our perspective, the proposed NRC guidance would significantly burden both utility and NRC resources without a concomitant gain in either maintaining or enhancing safety margins. We further believe that the guidance, as proposed, would serve to undermine the current flexibility in 10 CFR 50.59 (i.e. permitting changes that do not alter an individual plant's licensing basis, without prior NRC approval). Adoption of the proposed guidance would further increase engineering workloads without improving safety. Resources allocated to support this effort would refocus activities away from those that might be more important to safety.

Con Edison is pleased to have had the opportunity to provide its comments on this important proposal.

Very truly yours,

Stephen E. Quinn

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