

APR 01 1980

Mr. Joseph Sciandra, Board Chairman
 Community Board No. 1
 111 Canal Street
 Staten Island, New York 10304

Dear Mr. Sciandra:

This is in reply to your letter of January 25, 1980, concerning the operation of Indian Point Units 2 and 3.

The NRC is considering what special measures should be taken for nuclear power plants in areas of high population density to reduce the probability of a severe reactor accident and to lessen the consequences of such an accident by reducing the amount of radioactive releases or delaying such releases in order to provide additional time for evacuation.

Interim measures have already been ordered for the nuclear power plants at the Indian Point and Zion sites. I issued Confirmatory Orders to the licensee of Indian Point Unit 2 and the licensee of Indian Point Unit 3 on February 11, 1980, and to the licensee of Zion Units 1 and 2 on February 29, 1980, confirming their commitments to take actions necessary for continued assurance that the public health and safety will not be endangered by the continued operation of these units.

In each of these cases, the Order states that the particular site is believed to present a disproportionately high contribution to the total societal risk from reactor accidents due to the relatively high population density surrounding the site as compared to other nuclear power plant sites. The NRC Staff has currently under way two separate efforts to address the potential problems posed by this relatively high population density. One of the efforts involves the development, revision, and review of emergency plans. This effort is scheduled to be completed by January 1, 1981.

The other effort is a review of the Indian Point and Zion facilities to determine what additional procedural measures and/or design changes can and should be implemented that will further reduce the probability of a severe reactor accident and/or reduce the consequences of such an accident. Since design changes that may be decided upon may take one to two years to completely install, the NRC Staff has identified a number of extraordinary interim measures that should be accomplished both by the licensees and the Staff. Included among these are matters dealing with modes of operations,

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Mr. Joseph Sciandra

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shift manning levels, enhanced training of operators, and special containment and low pressure interface tests designed to add to the level of safety of operation of the facility. All requirements shall be implemented at the time intervals specified in the Orders or, in the alternative, the licensees shall place and maintain the affected unit or units in a cold shutdown condition within 48 hours pending completion of those actions.

In addition, I issued an Order on February 11, 1980, to the licensee of Indian Point Unit 1, which has been in a shutdown condition since October 31, 1974, to show cause why the operating authority for that unit should not be revoked and why the licensee should not submit a plan within 120 days to decommission that unit.

I assure you that every effort is being made to protect the public health and safety at all nuclear power plants currently in operation and those that may begin operation in the future.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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