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Statement Submitted By Brooklyn SHAD to Hearings Before
the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Brooklyn SHAD is a group committed to the development of safe energy alternatives. We are here tonight because we feel that in the case of Indian Point Nuclear Plant, it is insufficient for the NRC to concern itself only with emergency plans of the towns within the immediate vicinity of the plant. Our research indicates that any accident at Indian Point is certain to have an impact on New York City. We therefore feel that the NRC has a responsibility to insure that there are also adequate emergency plans for New York City before it permits Indian Point to continue operating.

We suppose at the back of everyone's mind is the question of whether anyone at Indian Point should really worry about Brooklyn. The answer, though, should be self-evident. If we in Brooklyn hear that there has been an accident at Indian Point, and we see that people in Westchester are being evacuated or are leaving by their own choice in large numbers, as did happen during TMI, you can be sure that we, and our eight million neighbors, are going to seriously consider evacuating also. And, as soon as some city dwellers do start leaving, and, as soon as we hear there are traffic jams at all tunnels and bridges, many more of us will say that it is time to leave. Once that happens, you may have a "stampede" on your hands. Unless there is an adequate emergency plan to handle this, a panic will set in.

There is substantial evidence to support our concern. We think it is crucial that the NRC realize in its evaluation of emergency plans that there are considerable differences between the area surrounding Indian Point and the area surrounding TMI. Unlike TMI, Indian Point is near a high-density population area. Brooklyn is located less than fifty miles

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from this nuclear plant. Within that fifty-mile radius lies twenty million people, 10% of the entire population of the United States.

Because the population here is more dense, it is likely that the reaction of the population to a nuclear accident would be different than that at TMI. We now know, for instance, that if an accident like that which happened at TMI did occur at Indian Point, many people who live near the plant would self-evacuate, just as people living near TMI did. A study commissioned by the NRC entitled, "Three Mile Island Telephone Survey," documented that nearly 40% of the population within fifteen miles of the plant self-evacuated. Beyond fifteen miles, the survey suggests, the percentage of self-evacuees at TMI fell off. This would appear to indicate that where there is a low-density population pattern, such as that around TMI, one need not be too concerned about peoples' response beyond fifteen miles. Any impact beyond that distance is diffused.

However, as we have indicated, the population pattern around Indian Point is quite different. As you go down the Hudson River, the density gets increasingly higher. Things happen in highly dense population areas that do not happen elsewhere. A blackout in the TMI area would probably have no significant impact on the residents of the Pennsylvania countryside. A blackout in New York City in 1977, though, resulted in a large scale riot and the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars by business.

As we see it, the effect of an accident at Indian Point would be like a set of dominoes placed closely together, each one knocking the next over. Only, here, the dominoes would be towns and cities along the Hudson, each causing the next to evacuate simply because people see or hear about the people "next door" evacuating. When the dominoes hit New York City, who

is to say that self-evacuation would not be attempted by a large number of people, leading to a panic situation?

There are a number of other factors that we believe could contribute to such a panic situation in New York City. These factors necessitate review by the NRC^{of} the adequacy of whatever emergency plans New York City has to handle a nuclear accident. First, New York City officials have conceded, on record, that any type of large scale evacuation plan is not feasible. Knowing this to be the case, the public may have doubts as to the credibility of statements by these same officials, at the time of an accident, that there is no need to evacuate. The credibility gap may also be increased by the fact that, after TMI, the public now harbors doubts as to just how forthcoming nuclear experts are. After all, these experts told us that nothing like TMI could ever happen.

Besides the population density and the credibility gap, another factor which could contribute to a panic situation in New York City is the proximity of the city's water supply system to Indian Point. A major portion of that supply system passes through aqueducts, or, lies in reservoirs, very close to Indian Point. This could arouse fears of radiation contamination of the water supply. Even if such fears have, as yet, no scientific basis, nevertheless, the perceived threat by the public of such contamination is a matter which any emergency plan must be prepared to deal with.

Finally, we can count on the local press to enlarge, rather than reduce, any fears aroused by an accident at Indian Point. One need only look at how the press handled the TMI accident. On March 30, 1979, the New York Post headline read, "Nuke Leak Goes Out Of Control - Fallout Vigil Begins Here." On March 31, 1979, the Daily News carried a headline, "Doomsday - Is This The Way It Will Dawn?," while the Post reported, "Race

With Nuclear Disaster...Harrisburg on Edge of Nightmare."

Thus, an accident at Indian Point could very well trigger a panic response from the New York City population. One need only recall that on Halloween night, 1938, there was a panic in the New York City area that resulted from Orson Welles' radio broadcast of, "The War of the Worlds." People then panicked not over something as realistic as a nuclear accident, but over a reported invasion of New Jersey by Martians.

In other words, while some scientists suggest that Indian Point is a nuclear accident waiting to happen, we would suggest that Indian Point is a nuclear panic waiting to happen.

Brooklyn SHAD therefore feels it is incumbent upon the NRC to determine the adequacy of any emergency plans for handling New York City in the event of an accident at Indian Point.

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We might further add that our inquiry into New York City's emergency plans suggests that New York City is virtually unprepared for an accident at Indian Point.

For one, taking the most extreme circumstances, New York City has no means of evacuating any portion of its population if such a course of action is needed. Lt. Hogan of the City's Office of Civil Preparedness has testified at Congressional hearings that the city considers any proposal for mass evacuation neither practical nor viable. Furthermore, the City has no plans for evacuating even the most vulnerable portion of the population - pregnant women and children; nor does it have any plans for obtaining and dispensing iodine tablets. Such tablets could reduce the

risk of radiation poisoning.

It is also questionable whether New York City's plans for handling something less than a forced evacuation are adequate. Such potential problems include self-evacuation by a significant number of people at one time, and looting. All that New York City's plans call for in the event of a nuclear accident is setting up a communications center. This is the same plan the City has for a major snowstorm. There is nothing proposed beyond this initial stage. There is not even a complete list of the personnel who should be contacted by the center in the event of such an accident.

An "effective" emergency plan for New York City might have to include the rather frightening prospect of a press blackout and a curfew enforced by police and National Guard at every street corner, an idea which we hope would never be considered.

In our mind, the real solution to these concerns is not the formulation of a conceivably "better" emergency plan. Rather, the solution lies in the removal of the source of the potential problem before it becomes an actual one. That is, Indian Point should not be allowed to continue operating.

The real issue comes down to whether it is necessary for New Yorkers to tolerate the possibility of a nuclear accident and the resulting panic. An analysis of New York State's energy supplies by the Union of Concerned Scientists indicates that there are presently available sufficient safe energy resources for our needs. We would therefore urge that Indian Point be de-licensed.