



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

April 19, 2011

Mr. Paul J. Feiner, Supervisor
Town of Greenburgh
177 Hillside Avenue
Greenburgh, NY 10607

Dear Mr. Feiner:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter dated March 15, 2011, regarding Indian Point Nuclear Generating Unit Nos. 2 and 3. The recent events in Japan have heightened concerns about the safety of U.S. reactors. The NRC staff has considered the facts known to date and has concluded that U.S. reactors continue to operate safely. U.S. reactors are designed to withstand natural events, including earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods, based on the specific site where the reactor is located, without loss of capability to perform their safety functions. Moreover, the Commission has directed the NRC staff to establish an agency task force and perform a review of U.S. nuclear plant safety. The task force will conduct both short-term and long-term analyses of the lessons that can be learned from the situation in Japan. As part of this assessment, the NRC will determine if there are changes that should be made to our programs and regulations to enhance protection of public health and safety and the environment. Areas of investigation will include the ability to protect against natural disasters, response to station blackouts, severe accident and spent fuel accident progress, and emergency preparedness, among others.

In the United States, the NRC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are the two Federal agencies responsible for evaluating emergency preparedness at and around nuclear power plants. The NRC is responsible for assessing the adequacy of onsite emergency plans, while FEMA is responsible for assessing the adequacy of State and local government offsite emergency plans.

Joint emergency planning guidance from the NRC and FEMA provides for two emergency planning zones (EPZs) around U.S. commercial nuclear power plants. The plume exposure pathway EPZ is approximately 10 miles in radius and is designed, in the unlikely event of an emergency, to safeguard the population most at risk from direct exposure to radiation levels in excess of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Protective Action Guidelines. The ingestion exposure pathway EPZ is approximately 50 miles in radius and is designed, in the unlikely event of an emergency, to protect the public from secondary exposure to radiation through the food chain or public water supplies. NRC and FEMA regulations state that State and local governments, in consultation with the NRC and FEMA, shall determine the exact size and shape of EPZs, taking into account local conditions such as demography, topography, land characteristics, access routes, and local jurisdictional boundaries. It should be noted that the size of the established EPZs are not limits, but rather provide for an emergency planning framework that would allow expansion or contraction of response efforts based on actual and projected radiological conditions.

P. Feiner

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The NRC requires that consideration be given to including the use of potassium iodide as a protective measure for the general public that would supplement sheltering and evacuation. In 2001 and 2007 the NRC supplied potassium iodide tablets to the State of New York for this purpose. We encourage you to contact the State of New York and Westchester County for specific information related to radiological emergency preparedness in your area.

Thank you for your interest in these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric J. Leeds". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eric" being the most prominent.

Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-247 and 50-286

cc: Listserv

R. Thomson, RAC Chair
FEMA RII

A. Feeney, Director
NY State Office of Emergency Management

P. Feiner

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/ra/

Eric J. Leeds, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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R. Thomson, RAC Chair
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A. Feeney, Director
NY State Office of Emergency Management

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