

183 Hoover Road
Rochester, NY 14617

March 30th, 2015

Honorable Stephen G. Burns
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-0001

Re: Denying Indian Point's Nuclear Power Plant License Renewal

Dear Honorable Burns:

I am an Environmental Studies student at Stony Brook University. I am writing to you today in regards to the future of New York City's energy supply and wellbeing. Located 34 miles north from the center of Manhattan, the Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant lies on the eastern bank of the Hudson River. As of right now, Indian Point's Unit #2 is operating past its expiration date; the approaching expiration date for Unit #3 is in December of this year. With the impending expiration date of its operating license, Entergy is seeking a license renewal for another 20 years. While Indian Point provides about one-fourth of New York City's energy, I believe that the vulnerable location and environmental implications that could arise from a meltdown outweigh the benefits of extending the use of the plant.

First, Indian Point is already posing a threat to the environment through its cooling system. Every day, two billion gallons of cooling water from the Hudson River is brought into the plant. Lacking the proper funds and equipment for a closed cooling system, aquatic life like fish and larvae are swept in along with the water and killed. Not to mention the accidental spills that release radiation into the water, exposing radioactive toxins to the aquatic life. Some of these radioactive toxins, like tritium and strontium-90, have been leaking from the spent fuels at the power plant and into the Hudson River since 2005¹. Spills, such as the one at Indian Point, happen and expose the surrounding organisms to increased levels of radiation.

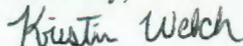
While the environment is currently facing detrimental impacts from the power plant, I also fear for the possible repercussions if a meltdown were to occur. Due to its location on the Hudson River, northerly winds could allow a radiation cloud to spread south towards the New York City region, causing a significant threat to public health. Under extreme circumstances, evacuation of Manhattan would be nearly impossible in a timely fashion, leaving people stuck on an island with limited escape outlets.

Furthermore, Indian Point lies in a seismically active area and is at risk of experiencing an earthquake of a magnitude of 6 or higher². This would be less concerning if Indian Point had the proper infrastructure to protect against earthquakes. Unfortunately, the age and location of Indian Point poses a serious risk to the environment and the millions of people surrounding the area.

Nuclear power is a great alternative to coal and oil under the right circumstances. However, the location and age of Indian Point is worrisome. With that said, I implore you to deny the license renewal. In doing so, New York City could invest in renewable energy, like offshore wind power, that would become a long-term sustainable solution. While it may take time to establish a renewable energy system, the rejection of a license renewal could allow the city to start looking into other plausible renewable sources. Otherwise, upgrades must be made to the power plant to protect against earthquakes and leaks.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate your consideration of this important matter regarding the future of New York City and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Kristin Welch

Disclaimer: The content and opinions stated in this letter are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Stony Brook University, its administration or its faculty.

¹ <http://www.riverkeeper.org/campaigns/stop-polluters/indian-point/radioactive-waste/>

² http://www.nrdc.org/nuclear/indianpoint/files/NRDC-1336_Indian_Point_FSR8medium.pdf

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