

November 30, 2015

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lowey:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of October 20, 2015, to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the NRC expressing continuing concern with Spectra Energy Partners' proposed pipeline project in the vicinity of the Indian Point Energy Center in Buchanan, New York.

I assure you that the NRC conducted a rigorous independent confirmatory analysis of Entergy's hazard analysis using software fully capable of supporting the analysis. Our analysis made conservative assumptions that resulted in an outcome more severe than could reasonably be expected to occur if there were a real pipeline rupture. The analysis included modeling a pipe break at the location closest to plant structures using ALOHA software and accounting for a limitation in the software by doubling the predicted gas release from the upstream side of a pipe break to account for flow escaping from both sides of the break. The NRC's independent analysis concluded that a potential rupture of the proposed pipeline would pose no threat to the safe operation or the safe shutdown of the plant.

Your letter urged us to require the conduct of an independent transient analysis. However, the bounding analysis prepared by the NRC staff postulates more severe results than a transient analysis would estimate because it assumed that the maximum gas release rate was sustained and did not decrease with time in the manner that a transient analysis would predict. This conservative assumption causes more gas to be available to explode than would be the case in a transient analysis which produces results that bound those that a more detailed analysis would yield. Therefore, we do not believe a separate transient analysis would provide any insight beyond the analysis already completed by the NRC.

Finally, the staff completed its responses to Mr. Blanch's 39 questions and sent a letter transmitting those answers to Mr. Blanch on November 6, 2015. A copy of that response is enclosed for your information. In addition, I met personally with Mr. Blanch and, based on his concerns, ensured that the NRC staff had performed a thorough analysis of the issues raised by Mr. Blanch. I also ensured that the staff was following appropriate NRC processes for responding to his concerns.

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Please know that the NRC shares your interest in ensuring the safety of Indian Point. If you need more information, please contact me or Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Stephen G. Burns

Enclosure:
As stated

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515