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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

February 18, 2016

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

Dear Chairman Burns,

I am writing to express my concern over the recent accidental release of radioactive material into groundwater at the Indian Point Energy Center in Buchanan, New York. This is the latest incident in a troubling pattern of unplanned shutdowns, transformer problems, and releases of radioactive materials into the groundwater at these aging plants.

While I know that the NRC has not yet completed its investigation into the specific cause of the most recent leak, it has been brought to my attention that the leak most likely occurred during preparations for the next refueling outage, while waste stream water was moving to the waste storage tank. More troubling are reports that Entergy personnel were aware of related equipment problems as early as 2014, but failed to adequately repair or replace the equipment. I encourage the NRC's investigation of this incident to include a review of whether the regulatory framework which does not consider these waste processing systems and equipment to be safety related contributed to the low priority of their repair and maintenance. As the NRC continues to investigate the cause of the leak, I urge you to also conduct a top-to-bottom review of the policies and procedures in place at Indian Point to maintain its aging infrastructure; whether additional oversight is necessary to ensure that the highest safety standards are being adhered to; and whether equipment used for radioactive waste handling should also be considered safety related for regulatory oversight purposes. Additionally, I would like information on whether the NRC's resident inspectors at Indian Point were aware of the malfunctioning equipment which caused the most recent leak, and whether it was flagged as a potential issue at any point prior to the discovery of the leak, and why the decision was made not to repair it in 2014.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and I look forward to your response. Should you or your staff wish to discuss this issue in further detail, please do not hesitate to contact Jordan Baugh, in my Washington, DC office.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator