

August 15, 2016

The Honorable Sean Patrick Maloney
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Maloney:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of June 17, 2016, in which you expressed concerns regarding restart of Indian Point Energy Center (Indian Point) Unit 2 and the need for a safety review of Indian Point Unit 3 in light of failed baffle-former bolts in Unit 2.

Entergy Nuclear Operations (Entergy) completed a root-cause analysis and took actions to address the degraded bolts before Indian Point Unit 2 restarted on June 14, 2016. After conducting our own independent review of Entergy's analysis and verifying the licensee's corrective actions, the NRC did not have an immediate safety concern that would have prevented the unit from restarting.

While baffle bolt failure is not a new or unknown phenomenon, the number of these failures found during the inspections at Indian Point 2 was beyond what the NRC would have expected. I want to update you on the actions taken to date at the site. Entergy performed ultrasonic testing on the reactor vessel internal bolts to look for degradation known to be caused by irradiation-assisted stress corrosion cracking. Entergy replaced all the bolts that were identified as flawed at Indian Point Unit 2 using bolts with material properties less susceptible to corrosion. No flaws were identified through ultrasonic testing of the remaining bolts. The NRC staff's independent assessment of this issue has included review of analyses performed by the original equipment vendor and past industry experience with such bolting replacements.

Regarding Indian Point Unit 3, Entergy has performed an evaluation to determine whether it is safe to continue operation of that reactor. Indian Point Unit 3's baffle bolts were exposed to less radiation than the bolts in Unit 2 in part because Unit 3 has a different operating history and less operating time than Unit 2. In addition, there are no current indications of loose parts or fuel leaks that would indicate significant problems with the baffle-former bolts in Indian Point Unit 3. The NRC is currently performing an independent review of the licensee's evaluation, but to date has not identified an immediate safety concern. Nevertheless, Entergy has since stated that it will perform an ultrasonic examination of Unit 3 bolts in the spring 2017 refueling outage, rather than the spring 2019 refueling outage, as originally planned.

The Commission shares your interest in ensuring that the Indian Point units operate in a manner that protects public health and safety. Please be assured that the NRC will continue

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to closely monitor this situation, remain alert to potential generic implications, and evaluate the need for further regulatory action. If you have any questions, please contact me or Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Stephen G. Burns