



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

NRC PUBLIC
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23 1981



Ms. Sandra R. Galef
Westchester County Board of
Legislators
White Plains, New York 10601

Dear Ms. Galef:

We received your letter of February 3, 1981 in which you express your concern regarding the evacuation plans presently under development for the environs around Indian Point.

As a point of clarification, you should be aware that NRC does not evaluate the State and local emergency plans. The responsibility for upgrading off-site emergency planning was assigned to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) by a Presidential Directive issued on December 7, 1979. Consequently, it is now FEMA's responsibility to review the offsite planning and preparedness, and present its findings to the NRC. We then review FEMA's findings which are included as part of our determination as to the overall state of emergency preparedness at and around the nuclear facility.

Returning to your concern as to the feasibility of evacuation around Indian Point, it should be remembered that evacuation is only one of the various protective action strategies that could be taken in the event of a serious accident. In fact, for most of the serious low probability events, we envision that sheltering would be the more desirable action from a risk-benefit viewpoint. Even for the most serious type release, sheltering followed by a more leisurely relocation may be the optimum choice of protective measures. Here again, as in most disaster situations, the actual measures to be taken at the time of the event will be influenced by the many variables that bear on the decision-making process. In the case of a nuclear power plant such factors would include the release characteristics, meteorological conditions, operational time constraints, and the physical protection factors of available shelter facilities.

As a matter of information, evacuations are a relatively common event in this country. In fact, the records show, at least since 1960, that an evacuation takes place somewhere in the U. S. on almost a weekly basis. The number of people evacuated in these events has ranged from a few to hundreds of thousands and some have occurred in high density urban and suburban areas. Two such events occurred in Baton Rouge, Louisiana in 1965 where 150,000 persons were evacuated in two hours and in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in 1972 where 75,000 persons were evacuated in five hours. Also, the metropolitan business district of downtown Portland, Oregon with a population of 101,000 persons and a population density approaching that

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of New York City, was evacuated in less than one hour during a Civil Defense test exercise in 1955. One of the largest evacuations in our history took place in 1961 as a result of hurricane Carla where over 500,000 people were evacuated from the States of Texas and Louisiana. Even though these are just a few examples, we consider that large scale evacuations are indeed feasible, and are a viable option.

You also expressed concern regarding the assurance that various emergency workers and civil officials would continue to do their part in providing the necessary support services during an emergency. I believe that your concern can best be addressed by relating some of the findings resulting from a study conducted by the Disaster Research Center of the Ohio State University which is devoted solely to research on disasters and associated problems:

- o The idea that people will panic in the face of great threat or danger is very widespread. However, it is not borne out in reality. Insofar as wild flight is concerned, the opposite behavioral pattern in most disasters is far more likely. People will often stay in a potentially threatening situation rather than move out of it. This really should be expected. Human beings have very strong tendencies to continue on-going lines of behavior in preference to initiating new courses of action.
- o Just as the panic image of disaster behavior is generally incorrect, so is the view that disasters leave victims dazed and disoriented both at time of impact and in the recovery period. Those who experienced disasters are not immobilized by even the most catastrophic of events. They are neither devoid of initiative nor passively dependent or expectant that others, especially relief and welfare workers, will take care of them and their disaster created needs. In fact, disaster victims sometimes insist on acting on their own even contrary to the expressed advice of the public authorities and formal agencies.
- o The assumption that local organizations are unable to cope with disasters is based both on the notion that these organizations and the communities in which they are located are overwhelmed by disaster impact, and also by the fear that the employees of these organizations are so affected by disaster impact that their efficiency is reduced. Neither of these notions stand up well under close observation.

You also expressed concern regarding those individuals whose mobility may be impaired due to "homebound" confinement. This same concern was surfaced by a Ms. Sandy Parrino representing the Office of Disabled, City of Ossining

at a meeting which we conducted on December 18, 1979 at the Westchester Inn in Ossining, New York. The meeting involved the NRC, the utilities, New York State and local officials, and the public. One purpose of that meeting was to solicit such public concerns for consideration and inclusion in the appropriate offsite emergency plans. We were assured by the State officials at that meeting that such matters would be studied and appropriately incorporated into the offsite emergency response plans. Since the responsibility for the review of these plans has been transferred to FEMA as I discussed earlier, I would suggest that you contact FEMA Region II in New York City for the provisions which have been made for "homebound" persons in the Indian Point environs.

In regard to your suggestion of placing emphasis on extended provisions for food and medical supplies within the home, places of business and schools, we do not consider that any special storage provisions for such items is required as part of the formal planning process.

If we can be of service to you in the future, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Victor Stello, Jr., Director
Office of Inspection & Enforcement



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February 3, 1981

Mr. John F. Ahearne, Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Ahearne:

I did not want to presume that an emergency evacuation plan from the 10 mile radius of Indian Point, Buchanan, New York could not be drafted. Therefore, I eagerly awaited the evacuation proposal that was compiled by the consultants for Con Edison and PASNY.

At this point, after reviewing the plan and attending the briefing by the consultants in Westchester on January 28, 1981, I now support the theory that evacuation is not a realistic alternative.

There are people suggesting that the plan can be modified to incorporate suggestions from the public, or that additional information can be collated. It has also been proposed that an extension of the April 1st deadline would give time to make the plan acceptable and workable.

I would like to go on record stating that the plan only represents a theory of words and not words of practicality. A plan has been developed which cannot be implemented and serves only to attempt to pacify a concerned public. It deflects proper consideration of more meaningful alternatives in an area as densely populated as ours.

Basic questions about this plan and about any plan based upon evacuation reveal the problems. For example:

a) Who has the authority to insure that necessary personnel, within and beyond the 10 mile radius, to execute the plan will in fact do their job rather than flee the area with their own families? The plan relies on bus drivers, policemen, medical personnel, radio station operators, directors of institutions, the Red Cross, prison guards, etc.

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b) According to the plan, the Ossining Correctional Facility will not be evacuated. What presumption is there that the guards and employees of the prison would remain within the 10 mile radius at this facility?

c) How will active lists be kept of the homebound? Who will be instructed to pick up the designated homebound and is sufficient equipment readily available to facilitate such transport?

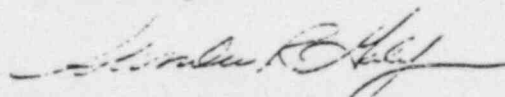
These issues only touch the surface. Present thinking concentrates on a Three Mile Island type event where fortunately, there was apparently no major escape of dangerous material. Suppose this is different and a hazardous cloud heads towards New York City. What does this do to the proposed plan?

As the NRC evaluates the submitted evacuation plan, I would suggest that a unique approach be contemplated, particularly justified, in light of the heavy concentration of the population in the area. The evacuation aspect of the plan should, I believe, be rejected and that, instead, an emphasis be placed on provisions for security within the home, business and school such as food and medical supplies to last for a period of days as well as related safety measures.

If you determine that self protection is not adequate to prevent a disaster, then I believe that continuation of the life of the plants at Indian Point are questionable.

I look forward to hearing your reaction to the Plan.

Sincerely,



Sandra R. Galef
County Legislator of
the Second District