



RETIRE INDIAN POINT CAMPAIGN WRONG PLANT, WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME.



INTRODUCTION

Twenty million people live within the 50-mile "peak injury" zone of Indian Point, located 24 miles north of the Bronx on the banks of the Hudson River in Westchester County. A large radioactive release triggered by a terrorist attack on or accident at the facility could have

devastating health and economic consequences, rendering much of the Hudson River Valley, including New York City, uninhabitable.

Due to the plant's vulnerability to terrorism, a laundry list of safety problems, the storage of 1500 tons of radioactive waste on-site, and the lack of a workable evacuation plan, Riverkeeper has been working toward the permanent shutdown of the Indian Point nuclear power plant since 2001.

On April 30, 2007, despite all the problems and public opposition to the plant, owner/operator Entergy submitted its relicensing application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for Indian Point 2 and 3, currently licensed until 2013 and 2015 respectively. On November 30, 2007, Riverkeeper joined New York State in filing formal intervention papers to block the relicensing.

Riverkeeper's call for closure is supported by over 400 elected officials, including 11 members of Congress, and a broad-based alliance of environmental, health, public policy, and civic groups united under the Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition (IPSEC).

RELICENSING

Per federal regulations, each nuclear power plant in the country operates under a license that dictates how long it can operate. Indian Point 2 (IP 2) and Indian Point 3's (IP 3) forty-year licenses expire in 2013 and 2015, respectively. Entergy, the owner/operator of Indian Point, has applied for a 20-year license extension on IP which would allow the plant to operate until 2035. The issues of terrorism, emergency planning, and nuclear waste are *not* taken into consideration in the relicensing process.

PLANT SAFETY

Plant operations are a major concern at IP, which has a long history of safety problems. IP 2 is the only plant to have received the worst safety rating from the NRC. Problems continue to plague both IP reactors. In 2005-6, IP had 9 unplanned shutdowns including a transformer fire that resulted in the plant's safety rating being lowered. The number of unplanned shutdowns at IP is five to six times higher than that of any of the nation's 103 nuclear plants.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE

Indian Point has one of the largest quantities of irradiated (or "spent") fuel in the northeast. While plant owners in other countries such as Germany are implementing more robust measures (i.e., hardening facilities) to protect the irradiated fuel on-site, there is inadequate protection for this waste in the U.S. There is currently no approved national repository to begin moving it to from temporary spent fuel pools located on-site at Indian Point and other U.S. nuclear power plants across the country. Approximately 1500 tons of spent fuel is currently stored in densely packed pools at Indian Point. No containment structures exist over the spent fuel pools, leaving them vulnerable to sabotage. In January 2008, Entergy began transferring some of the older spent fuel into dry casks. Their plan includes placing over 50 casks on a concrete pad with no protective barriers or containment structures. An NRC official, industry whistleblowers, and nuclear safety watchdogs have raised concerns about design flaws with the cask model being used at Indian Point and about the company's inadequate quality assurance program. If Indian Point is relicensed, an additional 1000 tons of high-level radioactive waste will be stored near our Rivertown communities.

Since at least August 2005, radioactive contaminants such as tritium and strontium-90 have been leaking from IP's spent fuel pools into the groundwater and the Hudson River. Entergy and the NRC have not been able to identify the source of the leaks, determine the extent of the leaks, or develop a realistic plan to stop the leaks. Moreover, four of twelve fish samples taken from the Hudson by Entergy showed detectable levels of strontium-90 in their flesh, raising new concerns as to the level of environmental damage caused by the leak of radioactive water. Riverkeeper immediately called on state and federal regulators to broaden their sampling program, so that a better picture of the extent of contamination as well as its public health effects could be ascertained; plans for expansive studies are currently being developed by government agencies.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The current emergency plan for IP relies on the idea that the public would have several hours to evacuate or seek shelter. A direct outgrowth of the public's concern regarding terrorism or accidents was whether IP's emergency preparedness plan could adequately protect people from exposure to high doses of radiation in the event of a fast breaking release scenario since a terrorist attack or accident could cause a radioactive release in minutes.

In 2002, Governor Pataki hired the former director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), James Lee Witt, to assess the adequacy of IP's emergency planning. The Witt report, issued in early 2003, criticized virtually every aspect of the emergency plan. The report concluded that the plan is "not adequate to... protect the people from an unacceptable dose of radiation in the event of a release from Indian Point." In January 2003, upon the release of the Witt Report, the four Emergency Planning Zone counties refused to submit their Annual Certification Letters (ACLs), checklists indicating that emergency procedures are in place and able to protect the public. The State Emergency Management Office (SEMO), honoring New York's long-held "home-rule" tradition, refused to cooperate with the Federal Emergency Management Office (FEMA). Since that time, Westchester, Rockland, and Orange Counties have repeatedly refused to submit their ACLs. FEMA has yet to address the fatal flaws in the emergency plans identified by the Witt Report. In 2007, Westchester County announced its decision to no longer participate in the emergency drills with Entergy due to Entergy's lack of preparedness.

In 2003, it was discovered that the 152 emergency sirens used to notify over 300,000 residents of an emergency at Indian Point were incapable of operating in the event of a power outage. In addition, the antiquated sirens have repeatedly failed during routine tests. Riverkeeper, in coordination with regional and national watchdog groups, petitioned the NRC to require backup power to emergency sirens at all U.S. nuclear power plants. When the federal agency denied the petition, Senator Hillary Clinton introduced an amendment to the Energy Policy Act of 2005 mandating that all Indian Point sirens be replaced by January 2007. Entergy has yet to bring the new system online, failing to meet all deadlines imposed by the federal government.

REENERGIZE NEW YORK

In fall 2006 Riverkeeper launched Reenergize New York, which focuses on legislative and policy initiatives at the local and state levels to address energy use and production in New York. In addition, we educate the public on energy conservation and efficiency measures for their homes, businesses, schools, and places of worship. In April 2008, Governor Spitzer unveiled his clean energy plan for New York, capturing all of Riverkeeper's policy initiatives and proposals.

HEALTH IMPACTS

A worst case scenario at IP involving a serious accident at or terrorist attack could lead to an unthinkable catastrophe of enormous proportions that could result in over 500,000 long-term deaths and 44,000 short-term deaths from radiation exposure. The National Academy of Science found low-level radiation to be far more toxic to human health than previously believed. According to the report issued in June 2005, even the lowest exposures to radiation increase the risk of contracting cancer.

SECURITY

Since the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, there has been mounting concern amongst area residents and elected officials that the IP nuclear power plant could be the target of a similar future attack. The 9/11 Commission and its witnesses divulged that additional air-based terrorist attacks have already been attempted, that more major attacks are likely in the future, and that nuclear power plants are top al-Qaeda targets. Equally troubling is the fact that the IP plant has been plagued by numerous security lapses since 9/11, and the NRC has not required plants to "harden" vulnerable components of their infrastructure, in particular the spent fuel storage system.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Help Riverkeeper close Indian Point! Subscribe to our Email Action Campaign to learn about upcoming public meetings and activities geared toward shutting down Indian Point.

*For more information, contact us at
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