



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

News from

Congressman Eliot Engel

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ENGEL TO NRC: DON'T RENEW INDIAN POINT LICENSE

Congressman Eliot Engel once again called on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to oppose the renewal of the operating license for the Indian Point nuclear facility. He cited its location near two seismic faults, its proximity to New York City, and the abysmal safety record of the facility.

Rep. Engel, a senior member of the Energy and Power Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said, "For years, I have been calling for Indian Point to be shut down. Indian Point would never be approved for its current location in today's world, this close to the most densely-populated area of the country. In addition, one of the September 11 jets commandeered by the terrorists flew over the plant on its way to the World Trade Center. In Tuesday's New York Daily News, columnist Michael Daly takes the case even further, citing the plant's location only one mile from the intersection of the region's two most active seismic faults. We must learn from the horrors taking place in Japan as they try to contain their nuclear plants.

"Indian Point says it is built to withstand a 6.1 Richter Scale earthquake, higher than the record for this area of 5.25. But Japan's scientists were confident that there would be no earthquake registering a 9 on the Richter Scale. Sadly, they were wrong."

The NRC has released a report saying that Indian Point's reactor number 3 has the highest risk of core damage from an earthquake among U.S. nuclear plants. The chance of quake-induced core damage at No. 3 is estimated at 1 in 10,000 every year, right on the verge of requiring "immediate concern regarding adequate protection" of the public.

"Indian Point is only 24 miles from New York City's more than eight million people, with 25 million living within a 50-mile radius of it. For the people in Westchester and Rockland Counties, there are not enough roads to allow a real evacuation in the event of an accident or an attack."

The incident in Japan highlights the issues surrounding any nuclear power plant that has "aged out," is beyond safe repair, and presents health and safety risks for the area. Indian Point is also located in the midst of the water supply for nine million people.

"I am not opposed to nuclear power," said the 12-term congressman. "But I am against nuclear power facilities so close to the Metropolitan area where the loss of life and the damage would be incalculable. Mr. Daly, the columnist, in calling Indian Point 'Chernobyl on the Hudson' cited a research paper by Columbia University that said the nuclear facility is located at "clearly one of the least favorable sites in our area from an earthquake hazard and risk perspective."

Indian Point is in the process of renewing its license for another 20 years and Rep. Engel called on the NRC to deny the license renewal. "The NRC has an obligation to the health and safety of people living here, and not to be cozy with the nuclear industry. Indian Point cannot remain on line," he said. "It poses too much of a risk and too many lives are at stake."

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