

Are we any closer to closing Indian Point this year?

YES

The Maine Yankee nuclear power plant shut down in 1996 after comprehensive independent inspections found too many problems for it to be financially feasible to fix. This year, legislation has been introduced into both houses of Congress which would require the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to conduct a Maine Yankee-style Independent Safety Assessment [ISA] at Indian Point Units 2 & 3 and a rigorous evaluation of the feasibility of the plant's emergency evacuation plans. Because the legislation requires that the assessment be conducted by independent experts and be monitored by local officials, and because the particular systems that would be assessed are the worst trouble-spots at Indian Point, such an assessment would likely turn up necessary repairs that would cost hundreds of millions if not billions of dollars. This would likely cause the permanent closure of Indian Point.

Indian Point Is Expensive, Polluting, Dangerous and REPLACEABLE

Despite many industry and administration claims to the contrary, nuclear is neither clean nor green—in reality, it is dirty and polluting. While greenhouse gases are not released by the reactors themselves, if you add up the emissions from mining and enriching uranium, the decommissioning process, and the management of nuclear waste, the CO₂ emissions become significant. Unlike sustainable energy sources, nuclear reactors enter production with huge "mortgages" of carbon debt. It takes years before these debts are repaid.

The industry receives BILLIONS of dollars in taxpayer subsidies which means cash is diverted from real climate change solutions. A typically omitted taxpayer expense is the cost for thousands of years of storage of lethal high-level radioactive waste. In addition, the free market will not supply insurance; this is paid for by our tax dollars through Congress's Price Anderson Act. These subsidies mask the true cost of nuclear generated electricity.

Nuclear plants produce tons of highly radioactive isotopes including plutonium, every year. These materials are deadly for thousands of years. Technology has yet to address the safe disposal of this waste, yet we keep producing more radioactive waste.

The US National Renewable Energy Laboratory recently concluded that we have the potential to meet our energy needs through renewable resources in the coming decades. Federal efforts and dollars must focus on promoting these technologies. The most profitable energy savings are those that come from reducing the amount of energy we waste, commonly called "negawatts." We can get much more for our money by conservation and efficiency in combination with the use of sustainable power sources than by pursuing the Trojan Horse of nuclear energy. We can also pass on a clean, sustainable and safe future to our children.



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INDIAN POINT UPDATE: THE PAST YEAR AT INDIAN POINT

Winter 2005

For the 3rd consecutive year 3 out of the 4 execs from the emergency zone counties refused to certify evacuation plan. Those were Westchester, Rockland and Orange. Putnam, which received \$500,000 from Entergy for an emergency center, approved the plan.

NYS gubernatorial candidate Eliot Spitzer declares support for closure of Indian Point, if energy reliability can be assured.

Spring 2005

National Academy of Sciences (NAS) released a study finding the spent fuel pools at US nuclear power plants to be soft targets, vulnerable to terrorist attack by aircraft or high explosives; due to the high levels of radioactivity in the irradiated fuel—making these pools a threat to public health.

The Government Accountability Office issued a report criticizing the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and nuclear power plant owners, including Entergy, for ineffective oversight, poor inventory management, and lax safety and security management of high-level radioactive fuel.

The Westchester County-commissioned Levitan report found that the energy currently supplied by Indian Point 2 & 3 could be replaced through a combination of new plants and increased energy efficiency measures.

Summer 2005

Power to Indian Point's emergency siren system failed twice, once for six hours before officials were aware of the problem.

Entergy offered to replace sirens on the eve of Senator Clinton's amendment to Energy Bill, which mandated backup power for IP sirens.

Fall 2005

As officials from FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security were assessing security and emergency planning for the Indian Point nuclear power plant, the FEMA debacle in the wake of Hurricane Katrina led the press and the public to once again raise doubts about FEMA's approval of the Indian Point evacuation plan.

NRC and Entergy notify the public that radioactive water is leaking from IP2's spent fuel pool. NRC orders a special inspection to determine the source of the leak.

Entergy notifies the NRC that a sample from a monitoring well located in the IP2 transformer yard shows tritium contamination that is ten times the EPA drinking water limit for the radionuclide.

The NRC and Entergy confirm that the radioactive leak discovered in August is greater than first believed. Tritium was discovered in five testing wells around Indian Point 2.

Nearly three months after its discovery, the tritium leak at IP2 remains unsolved; Entergy's use of underwater cameras and divers to inspect and test for leaks on the steel liner's surface yielded no results.

Entergy reports to the NRC that a sample from monitoring well shows tritium 30 times above EPA limit. The NRC still does not know where the leak is coming from, how long it has been leaking, or the extent of groundwater contamination under the plant.

Winter 2006

Westchester and Rockland county executives joined forces with 4 congressional reps from the Lower Hudson Valley--Nita Lowey, Sue Kelly, Eliot Engel, and Maurice Hinchey --to ask federal officials not to certify the evacuation plan. One month later these reps plus Christopher Shays (CT) introduced legislation for an Independent Safety Assessment (ISA) of IP.

Entergy reports small amounts of radioactive groundwater seeping into the Hudson River. The materials identified are tritium and strontium-90, both radioactive isotopes cause cancer in humans.

Riverkeeper learns that two state regulatory agencies knew about strontium 90 leaks but withheld this info from the public.

In an exchange with NRC Chief Nils Diaz, Sen. Clinton echoed the call for an ISA Diaz agreed, only later to renege, asserting that the NRC is an independent agency. Clinton then called for an ISA in the Senate.

Spring 2006

Nearly 3 times the amount of strontium-90 permitted in drinking water was found in IP's groundwater near the Hudson River. Over 500 residents show up at special NRC meeting on leaks.

Riverkeeper announces lawsuit against Entergy for violating the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the federal law that regulates releases of toxic waste into the environment because Entergy failed to notify the EPA within 24 hours of discovering the leak of radioactive isotopes from the Indian Point 2 spent fuel pool into IP's soil and groundwater.

Entergy reports that the Indian Point 1 spent fuel pools are the source of the strontium-90 leak. However, there is no indication how long the leak from IP1, originally discovered in 1994, has been leaching into groundwater. Until this announcement, Entergy had said the leakage from the IP1 pool was collected and treated before being released into the Hudson.

NAS study finds power at Indian Point can be replaced with conservation, energy efficiency and other sources. The report found this will cost more, but grassroots is unanimous, it's always cheaper to avoid a disaster than pay for it after the fact.

The Dept of Homeland Security criticizes plan for siren system at IP saying that new design would leave some unable to hear siren.