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Westchester wants IP checked out

By Abby Luby



Indian Point

At the same time Congressman John Hall announced legislation for a safety check at Indian Point, the Westchester County Board of Legislators unanimously voted to support that measure.

“Why would you not vote for it?” asked Minority Leader George Oros whose district includes the Buchanan based plants. “If the plant is as safe as people say, I would hope that would ease some of the fears and tone down rhetoric from people who want to have the plant closed.”

“This was a no-brainer,” added Legislator Mike Kaplowitz (D-Somers), adding he was disappointed that plant owner Entergy hadn’t voluntarily offered an independent assessment.

“Given the spate of problems that continue unabated at Indian Point and Entergy’s ability to bury their operation with NRC compliance, the only chance to defend public safety is to go this route.”

Westchester is joining other area municipalities who passed safety assessment resolutions including, Croton, Ossining, Beacon, Putnam Valley, Ramapo and Cortlandt. Putnam County also passed a similar resolution. The legislation requires independent experts examine operating systems, plant maintenance and re-evaluating the evacuation plan.

Board follows Spano’s lead

In December, Entergy announced its plan to re-license the plants for 20 more years. The current 40-year license expires in 2013 for Unit 2 and 2015 for Unit 3. On the heels of the announcement, Westchester County Executive Andrew Spano petitioned the NRC to consider health and safety issues when reviewing Entergy’s re-licensing application. Spano also fears the plant could be a terrorist target.

Reviewing only plant operations in the re-licensing process, the NRC rejected Spano's request. He appealed to the federal government to review the NRC ruling on February 1.

"Did the NRC forget September 11th ever happened?" said Spano in a press release. "I guess they don't think that a county whose population has increased by 100,000 since the plant was first sited makes any difference."

Spitzer and Cuomo slam NRC and Entergy

Last month the NRC turned down a petition requiring nuclear plants to build protective barriers against aircraft attacks. In a prepared statement, New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo said the federal government is ignoring the warnings of the 9/11 Commission which reported that al-Qaeda terrorists considered attacking nuclear power plants with aircraft.

"We need to implement demand-reduction strategies, develop alternative energy, and build new power plants that are as safe and clean as possible to move toward a future without Indian Point," said Cuomo.

Last week Governor Spitzer demanded nuclear plants in New York foot the bill for military security under his new budget. For Entergy that means shelling out about \$6.7 million yearly.

Strontium in fish at Indian Point

In January the radioactive isotope Strontium-90 was found in Hudson River fish near Indian Point. Entergy ran tests on fish pulled from the river in the summer. The plant annually discharges 24 million gallons of radio logically contaminated water into the river. The Westchester Citizen's Awareness Network, Rockland Friends United for Safe Energy, Code Pink and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation requested that Spitzer suspend Entergy's discharge permit for health reasons was.

Last week, Spitzer spokesman Marc Violette said the governor declined to comment on the request.