

May 19, 2000

The Honorable Benjamin A. Gilman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-3220

Dear Congressman Gilman:

I am responding to your letter of April 12, 2000, concerning the steam generator tube failure at Indian Point 2 (IP2) on February 15, 2000. As you know, the event involved a steam generator tube failure that resulted in primary coolant water mixing with the water that is used to produce steam for electric power generation. The steam generator tube failure resulted in a minor radiological release to the environment. While we are concerned and taking appropriate regulatory actions, it is important to note that the release was within regulatory limits, did not result in radioactivity above normal background radiation levels, and did not adversely impact public health and safety.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) sets regulatory requirements that must be met by the licensee for IP2, Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (Con Ed), to ensure protection of public health and safety. The NRC is overseeing Con Ed's steam generator tube inspections, repairs, and other corrective actions to ensure that these public health and safety requirements are met. Since Con Ed's current steam generator inspections have determined that more than one percent of the tubes inspected are defective, the IP2 license requires NRC approval before plant restart. I assure you that the NRC will not approve restart until Con Ed demonstrates that NRC requirements have been met.

The Union of Concerned Scientists has submitted a Petition to the NRC requesting that the existing steam generators be replaced prior to restart. In general, a plant operator can meet NRC requirements for steam generator tube leakage through a number of methods, including by repairing or plugging defective tubes. However, the NRC is carefully reviewing the petitioner's request and will make its decision public when the review is completed. In addition, the NRC staff is planning to hold a public meeting in the vicinity of the plant to discuss the staff's evaluation of the Indian Point 2 steam generators prior to restart.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve