

January 29, 2002

The Honorable Sandra R. Galef
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Ms. Galef:

I am responding to your letter of January 8, 2002, in which you requested information about spent fuel storage. I understand that members of the public have been asking you numerous questions and that there is heightened interest in this area following the tragic events of September 11th. Shortly after receiving your letter, I spoke with Bill Finneman of your office informing him that I was express mailing NRC publications to your office that address some of the questions you posed.

One of the issues you raised, that is not addressed in those publications, pertains to the use of wet versus dry spent fuel storage. Both wet and dry storage of spent fuel are acceptable means of fuel storage depending on the age of the spent fuel. Spent fuel which was recently removed from the reactor is stored in water to remove the heat it generates. As time passes, the heat generated decreases. Transferring spent fuel from a wet to a dry spent fuel storage arrangement is precluded until heat generation decreases to a level consistent with the requirements for that storage system design. The decision to pursue the use of dry fuel storage at the Indian Point plants rests with the station licensee, Entergy. NRC approves dry fuel storage cask designs, and reviews site-specific issues related to their use.

As you know, the September 11th events led to an increased sensitivity regarding disseminating information in the public realm that could be of value to terrorists. For this reason, the NRC is currently not publicly releasing certain information relating to spent fuel storage or shipping.

The NRC is committed to keeping its external stakeholders informed through various measures including the NRC website and public plant performance review meetings under the Reactor Oversight Program. In the case of Indian Point 2, we have worked diligently to inform the public, government officials and other external stakeholders of our oversight activities. Most recently, as you know, we hosted a meeting in the local area on December 20, 2001, and are planning another local meeting in early March to discuss plant performance.

The Honorable Sandra R. Galef

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Thank you for your inquiry. If you have further questions, please contact me at (610) 337-5234.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Peter W. Eselgroth, Chief
Projects Branch 2
Division of Reactor Projects

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