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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

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May 20, 2016

The Honorable Stephen G. Burns
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, DC 20555-001

Dear Chairman Burns:

Recent press reports of degraded and cracked bolts at the Indian Point nuclear power plant in New York and the Salem Nuclear Generating Station in New Jersey have raised significant concerns about safety risks at those nuclear facilities, as well as at similar reactors nationwide.

We understand that both the Indian Point and Salem nuclear plants are Westinghouse four-loop pressurized water reactors of similar design. The bolts, known as "baffle former bolts," hold together metal plates that direct cooling water through the reactor core. We are concerned that failure of the degraded bolts could have serious safety consequences and this issue may also exist at other aging reactors of similar design, including the Diablo Canyon Power Plant in California.

The degraded bolts were identified during Indian Point's "Aging Management Program" inspection, which is implemented only once every 10 years. We are concerned that other similar reactors may have degraded bolts but will not be inspected for several years.

To address these concerns, we ask that the NRC respond to the following:

1. By May 25, 2016, identify other reactors in the United States of a similar design to the Indian Point and Salem nuclear power plants;
2. By June 3, 2016, identify what factors can contribute to degraded bolts in such reactors, and provide the schedule for inspecting reactors with a potential for degraded bolts.

Thank you for your prompt attention to our request. We look forward to working with you to ensure the safety of our nation's nuclear power plants.

Sincerely,


Barbara Boxer
Ranking Member


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator


Cory Booker
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Kristine L. Svinicki, Commissioner
The Honorable William C. Ostendorff, Commissioner
The Honorable Jeff Baran, Commissioner

McCloskey, Bridin

From: "Albritton, Jason (EPW)" <Jason_Albritton@epw.senate.gov>
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To: "Weil, Jenny" <Jenny.Weil@nrc.gov>, "Moreno, Angel" <Angel.Moreno@nrc.gov>
Subject: [External_Sender] Letter to Chairman Burns

Please find attached a letter to Chairman Burns.

Thanks.

Jason Albritton
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Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Senator Barbara Boxer, Ranking Member
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