

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD  
Before Administrative Judges  
Louis J. Carter, Chair  
Frederick J. Shon  
Dr. Oscar H. Paris

-----x

In the Matter of:	:	Docket Nos.
CONSOLIDATED EDISON COMPANY OF NEW YORK	:	50-247 SP
Inc. (Indian Point, Unit No. 2),	:	50-286 SP
	:	
POWER AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK	:	July 23, 1982
(Indian Point, Unit No. 3)	:	

-----x

Testimony Submitted on Behalf of  
"New York City Council" Intervenors

By

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

EDWARD C. WALLACE

This Document Has Been Filed By:

NATIONAL EMERGENCY CIVIL LIBERTIES COMMITTEE  
175 Fifth Avenue Suite 712  
New York, New York 10010  
(212) 673-2040  
CRAIG KAPLAN,  
SPECIAL COUNSEL



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
CITY HALL  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007

EDWARD C. WALLACE  
COUNCILMEMBER-AT-LARGE, MANHATTAN  
CITY HALL  
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007  
566-1323

COMMITTEES:  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
HEALTH  
PARKS RECREATION &  
CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
YOUTH SERVICES

TESTIMONY BY EDWARD C. WALLACE

As Councilmember-at-Large representing the entire borough of Manhattan, I am deeply concerned about the possibility that an accident at Indian Point would endanger the lives of the residents of New York City and the surrounding metropolitan area. I strongly oppose continued operation of nuclear plants at Indian Point because I do not believe that the alleged benefits of nuclear power outweigh the risk to public health and safety. Evacuation of the people who live and work in Manhattan, in the event of a nuclear accident, I believe, would not be feasible.

Evacuation of Manhattan would mean evacuation of 1.5 million residents. In any evacuation attempt, the problems posed by the high density of Manhattan would be complicated by the demographic characteristics of the population. Two hundred-thousand residents of Manhattan, or thirteen percent of the population, are over the age of 65. Many of these elderly people find it difficult if not impossible to make a trip to the supermarket; to evacuate them under emergency conditions would require the assistance of a large and well-organized evacuation

team equipped with wheelchairs, vans, and other special equipment.

Any evaluation of the feasibility of evacuating Manhattan must take into account the serious problems posed by the need to evacuate large numbers of people from hospitals, day care centers, schools, and prisons. The city, state, Veterans, and private hospitals in Manhattan--and on Ward's and Roosevelt Islands--have over 17,000 beds. In addition, there are more than 2,500 patients in mental hospitals, as well as 6,300 beds in nursing homes. The prison population of nearly 10,000 from just Manhattan and Riker's Island might, I suppose, be released to fend for themselves but no parent would be satisfied if the 200,000 students in Manhattan public and private schools received the same treatment in an emergency situation.

The resident population of Manhattan is 1.5 million. A significant number of the two million people employed in Manhattan commute from the other boroughs or from Long Island or New Jersey, doubling the daytime population of Manhattan. Moreover, on an average day, there are 45,000 tourists.

When evaluating the feasibility of evacuating Manhattan given the available forms of transportation, we must not forget that Manhattan is not only one of the most densely populated areas in the United States but is also an island. People driving South and West to escape the threat of contamination by radiation have access to a large number of north-south and east-west streets, but

eventually all traffic leaving the island must exit through one of the limited number of bridges and tunnels. On an average working day, over 116,000 cars, buses, and trucks commute westbound across the George Washington Bridge while nearly 83,000 vehicles exit through the Holland and Lincoln tunnels. As commuters know, driving out of Manhattan during the evening rush hour often involves more time standing still than moving forward. In an emergency situation calling for the evacuation of the entire city, these few arteries would be hopelessly jammed.

There are several forms of public transportation available for those who do not own cars, including buses, taxis, subways, and railroads. The subway system alone carries 3.4 million passengers per day, while the PATH trains to New Jersey transport 190,000 people. While it is true that these trains would be able to transport a large number of people fleeing the city in the event of a nuclear accident, they would by no means be able to accomodate all of the residents of Manhattan as well as the commuters who entered the island in the morning. In addition, the public transportation system has no evacuation or emergency situation plans.

There are 11,000 taxi cabs in New York City, but not all operate in Manhattan or at the same time. Moreover, as a former cab driver, I would suspect that in the case of a nuclear plant accident the average cab driver would return home to rescue his or her own family rather than capitalize on the emergency by driving New Yorkers to Pennsylvania.

In times of crisis, such as blackouts or subway strikes, most New Yorkers respond with common sense and level heads and often a spirit of cooperation prevails. However, under conditions where health and safety-- and indeed the survival--of family and friends are at stake, even the most rational and city-toughened may panic. It is unreasonable to expect that evacuation of the city of New York will be a calm and orderly process. Should feasible emergency directives be developed and the public made aware of such plans, it would take only a small number failing to obey these guidelines to complicate--if not make entirely impossible--the evacuation of the city. During the summer blackout of 1977 we must remember, the looting and pillaging of stores added a sour note to the spirit of cooperation amongst most New Yorkers.

Even on a normal day the effectiveness of Manhattan's transportation network is compromised by serious delays, especially at peak hours. In the event of a nuclear accident the number of people trying to flee the city would be so great that the situation would be qualitatively more complicated. Compounding this is the element of panic--based on a reasonable fear of exposure to radiation--and thus it would be virtually impossible to evacuate more than a portion of the people living and working on Manhattan island.

Clearly, then, evacuation of Manhattan would merely be a case of survival of those who were lucky enough to be situated near avenues of escape. It is simply impossible

to evacuate all the people from Manhattan. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission should not take the chance of endangering the residents of the nation's most densely populated area by permitting the continued operation of nuclear plants at Indian Point.