

TO:

Mr. Nunzio Palladino, Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555
May 19, 1983

FROM:

Rep. Ted Weiss
17th Congressional District
New York, N.Y.

STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN TED WEISS ON PROPOSED EVACUATION
PLANS AT INDIAN POINT NUCLEAR POWER STATION IN NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission, I want to thank you for this opportunity to comment on the lack of adequate emergency evacuation plans for the area surrounding the Indian Point nuclear generating complex in Buchanan, N.Y. The Commission deserves praise for its willingness to assure the public's safety by closing the two reactors during the absence of viable evacuation preparations. But the purpose of my statement is to request that you provide the best safety guarantee of all and permanently shut down the plants.

As you are well aware, I have long been concerned about the danger Indian Point poses by virtue of its proximity to one of this country's most populous areas. I have come to the conclusion that planning for a nuclear accident is an exercise in futility, especially in this location, since I am convinced it would be impossible to organize an orderly and speedy evacuation of the 288,000 people who live within a 10-mile radius of Indian Point.

A recent study conducted for your Commission indicated a "worst case" accident during adverse weather conditions could cause 46,000 to 50,000 early deaths within a 17.5-mile radius, 141,000 to 167,000 radiation-related deaths within a 50-mile radius, and \$274 to \$314 billion in economic costs. As remote as the possibility of such a devastating accident may be, these

chilling statistics cause me great anxiety. The prospect of a lesser accident is not at all reassuring.

I echo the recent comments of New York City Mayor Ed Koch when I say I would rather have slightly higher electric bills than face the risk of a nuclear accident.

My concern, of course, focuses beyond the immediate 10-mile radius to my home city, New York City, and the district which I represent in Congress, in Manhattan and the Bronx. The distance which separates the city from Indian Point is only 35 miles.

Nuclear physicist Jan Beyea has said a large section of the city would be contaminated with deposited radioactive materials if, during a large-scale atmospheric release of radioactivity, the wind was blowing toward the Statue of Liberty and rain was falling from the skies. Yet the evacuation plans required by the federal government concentrate on the 10-mile radius around the plants, mandating only the monitoring of air, water and foodstuffs outside that radius. No plan to evacuate New York City's populace exists or is presently proposed. And even if such a plan were to be developed, its effectiveness would remain questionable.

I realize utilities around the country are nervously watching the fate of the dilemma with which Consolidated Edison and New York State Power Authority, as owners of Indian Point units 1 and 2, are faced. But I find it difficult to sympathize. On the matter of safety, the nuclear power industry has placed the cart before the horse. Why, in an industry that has been building nuclear power plants for more than two decades, do

generators at 36 sites still lack approved evacuation plans? I would respectfully suggest that if safety were as important a priority as we are led to believe it is, evacuation plans would have been developed before the first cement was poured at each site.

So I join Rockland County, 23 members of the New York City Council, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the New York Public Interest Research Group and nine state legislators, among many others, in asking the Commission to act against Indian Point. The mandate for such action is stipulated in a regulation promulgated by the Commission in 1981 when it decided every operating nuclear power plant in the United States must have an emergency evacuation plan. Evaluations by the Federal Emergency Management Agency have repeatedly itemized the deficiencies in present planning.

I am asking the Commission to consider the public's safety above all else.

Thank you.