



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

March 20, 2014

The Honorable Sandra R. Galef
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 641
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Ms. Galef:

I am responding to your letter of January 23, 2014, to Chairman Allison M. Macfarlane of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), regarding your concerns over proposed increases in energy delivery and transmission systems near Buchanan. The proposed Algonquin Incremental Market (AIM) Project and the West Point Partners Transmission (WPPT) Project will pass in the vicinity of the Indian Point Energy Center (IPEC). Your letter contained questions directed to a number of Federal and State agencies that have various jurisdictions over electrical transmission, natural gas pipelines, and nuclear power plant operation. Below, we address those questions that we believe are pertinent to the NRC.

Specifically, you asked, (1) "Does the NRC have an opportunity to weigh in on the impact to IPEC's safety that siting increased capacity gas pipes and electric transmission lines would have, both in constructing of the lines/facilities as well as their ongoing operations?" and (2) "Is there any communication between licensing and siting agencies to ensure that the overlap or convergence of these three energy production and delivery infrastructures makes sense, are safe, and are vetted?"

The *Code of Federal Regulations* requires that nuclear power plant structures, systems, and components important to safety be appropriately protected against dynamic effects resulting from events and conditions that may occur outside the nuclear power plant. These events include the effects of explosion of hazardous materials that may be associated with nearby industrial activities such as storage facilities or transportation routes such as navigable waterways and pipelines. The NRC was informed by Entergy Nuclear Operations that they've been actively engaging Spectra Energy in order to obtain a better understanding of the AIM project and to ensure that appropriate reviews and analyses are conducted to determine whether the proposed project could introduce increased hazards near or on the IPEC site. The NRC will continue to monitor these activities.

For your information, there are three gas pipelines, with only two typically in-service simultaneously, that traverse the IPEC owner controlled area. The NRC has independently evaluated the external hazards posed by these pipelines on safety-related structures a number of times over the years, including pre-licensing in 1973 and more recently in 2003 and 2008. Our evaluations have considered the design and construction of the gas lines, operation and maintenance practices, postulated failure modes, and standoff distances to safety-related structures. The NRC staff believes that a jet fire would be the most likely consequence of a major pipe rupture and the resulting fire would be limited to immediate flammable materials, such as trees, and would not impact safety-related structures. The modeling of a vapor cloud explosion, which the staff believes is highly improbable, would create an overpressure wave that would dissipate to below 1 psig before reaching safety-related reinforced concrete structures,

S. Galef

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such as the Unit 3 diesel generator building, and would not pose a threat. Therefore, our reviews have concluded that the pipelines do not adversely affect the safety and security of the plant.

In response to your second question regarding coordination between the various responsible agencies, a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the NRC and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) was executed in 2009. In accordance with the MOA, the two agencies may consult with each other with regard to the availability of technical information that would be useful in areas of mutual interest, and we promote and encourage a free flow of such information. The NRC has contacted FERC to inform them of our involvement as a regulatory agency for the Indian Point Nuclear Generating Units. Our agencies will certainly engage each other should there be questions or concerns as we mutually conduct our independent reviews of this matter.

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the potential effects of these proposed projects on the Indian Point site. If you have any further questions, please contact the NRC's Project Manager for IPEC, Mr. Douglas Pickett at (301) 415-1364.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele G. Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michele G. Evans, Director
Division of Operating Reactors Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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/ra/

Michele G. Evans, Director
Division of Operating Reactors Licensing
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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