

March 13, 2000

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lowey:

I am responding to your letter of February 18, 2000, concerning the recent steam generator tube leak at Indian Point Nuclear Generating Unit No. 2. The Commission appreciates your concerns, and we are taking actions to understand the event fully.

I understand that on February 28, 2000, Mr. Samuel Collins, Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, and other NRC staff members discussed with you and several interested parties issues associated with this event. As you are aware, the NRC has sent an Augmented Inspection Team (AIT) to the Indian Point 2 facility to determine what happened prior to, during, and after the event. The AIT is expected to complete its report by the end of April 2000.

The NRC has requirements for the operation, maintenance, and monitoring of steam generators. These requirements include limitations on steam generator tube leakage during plant operation. Indian Point 2 has had some steam generator tube leakage throughout the current plant operating cycle. However, the leakage rate was well below the plant technical specification limits and well below the more strict administrative limits established by the licensee. Commercial nuclear power industry experience to date has shown that steam generator leakage at the low levels noted at Indian Point 2 prior to the February 15, 2000, event is typically not predictive of a tube failure.

Consolidated Edison Company, the licensee for Indian Point 2, is responsible for performing detailed examinations of the steam generators. The AIT will review Consolidated Edison's actions on steam generator maintenance and performance in greater detail. In addition to the AIT review, the NRC's Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation is conducting a review that is focused on the analysis of data arising from the Indian Point 2 steam generator inspections, problem identification, root cause analysis, and corrective actions.

Information regarding this event and NRC's reviews will be made available to members of the public and their representatives in Congress. We will provide you the results of NRC's reviews of this event as soon as the reviews are completed. We have scheduled a public meeting on Tuesday, March 14, 2000, at 7:00 p.m., at the New York State Armory in Peekskill, New York,

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to discuss this event and our actions in this matter. Additional public outreach activities to the communities surrounding Indian Point 2 will also be conducted to provide up-to-date information on our findings regarding this event.

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve