

Rec'd 3/24

ACTION

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 03/30/00

EDO CONTROL: G20000141
DOC DT: 03/14/00
FINAL REPLY:

Representative Michael P. Forbes

TO: Chairman Meserve

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** GRN **
Travers, EDO

CRC NO: 00-0180

DESC: INDIAN POINT REACTOR ACCIDENT ISSUES
(Scott Cullen, STAR Foundation)

ROUTING:
Travers
Paperiello
Miraglia
Norry
Blaha
Burns
Miller, RI

DATE: 03/16/00

ASSIGNED TO: NRR CONTACT: Collins

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:
NRR Action: KLP/M. Myslinski
NRR Routing: Collins / Zimmerman
Johnson
Sharon
NRR Mailroom

NRR Received: March 17, 2000

ACTION
DUE TO NRR DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
BY 3/24/00

MICHAEL P. FORBES
1ST DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE:
APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT
TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE:
BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND
COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3201

March 14, 2000

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CONAM, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK 11727
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mike.forbes@mail.house.gov

REC'D BY Mr. Richard Meserve, Chairman
16 MAR 0 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852-2738

Dear Mr. Meserve:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I received from Scott Cullen. He is the chief counsel for the S.T.A.R. foundation and a constituent of mine. I would appreciate your looking into some of the Indian Point reactor accident issues which Mr. Cullen addresses. Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL P. FORBES
Member of Congress

MPF/SDM



February 24, 2000

STANDING FOR TRUTH ABOUT RADIATION

Congressman Michael Forbes
125 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515-3201

Re: Indian Point

Dear Congressman Forbes:

We are writing to seek your assistance in requiring the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to provide a more accurate and complete reporting of the radiation release from the recent Indian Point reactor accident. As you may know, the accident last week resulted in the release of radioactive steam and possibly other materials to the atmosphere. Very soon after the accident the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the utility, Consolidated Edison publically stated that the release posed no dangers to the public. However, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and Consolidated Edison have yet to disclose the volume of gas released and actual radiation levels that escaped into the environment. We believe that the NRC and the Indian Point operator have a responsibility to provide the public with a clear accounting of any radiation released to the environment. They have failed to meet that obligation.

On February 17th of this year the New York Times reported that the long term leakage rate in this steam generator was initially the equivalent to 0.0014 gal/min. Then, a week or 10 days before the incident, the leakage rate increased to 2.5 gallons/day and the operators were notified to be alert for any further increase. When the steam generator failed, the leakage rate of highly radioactive primary cooling water jumped to between 75 and 90 gallons/min. The reactor was scrambled or put into a prompt shutdown while operating at very near full power. However, according to experts we have consulted, it takes almost 5 or 10 minutes after the "scram" for the reactor to reduce its power levels below 30 megawatts. The charging pumps were not able to keep up with the leak rate of 75-90 gal/min. Apparently, the Emergency Core Cooling System (ECCS) did not activate automatically and was not activated by the operators. Instead, pressure reduction in the primary system was initiated by opening a pressure relief valve. However, the rate of pressure reduction had to be restricted by the allowed rate of temperature reduction of the primary coolant, and must have taken several hours

This means that the radioactive steam release from the leaking steam generators could have continued for several hours and that the amount of radioactivity released could have been significantly large. Radioactivity carried into the atmosphere by steam contained an array of radioisotopes directly from the primary reactor core coolant which are dangerous to human health.

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www.noradiation.org

This incident reflects a continuing pattern of behavior by the NRC and nuclear utilities to trivialize accidental radiation releases without an accurate and complete accounting what actually got out. The STAR Foundation urges you to ensure that this is not the case. In this regard, we respectfully request that you support the creation of an independent panel that includes representatives of the affected communities to determine the magnitude and degree of radioactivity that was released by the Indian Point reactor accident. I have also attached is a list of questions which the NRC should be required to answer as part of this review.

The NRC has an utmost obligation to be truthful and accurate about the radiological consequences of nuclear accidents at commercial nuclear power plants. In this time of utility deregulation, there are great pressures to reduce and curtail the necessary collection and reporting of such information that is crucial to protection of public health and safety. We are concerned that the recent unfortunate reactor accident at Indian Point may be subject to those pressures. At issue is the fundamental right of citizens to know what kinds of risks are posed by nuclear accidents. In the aftermath of the Indian Point reactor accident, we urge you to take the necessary steps to protect that basic right.

Sincerely,



Scott Cullen
Counsel

1. What was the total amount of primary coolant lost through the leak?
2. How much time transpired between the tube failure and reactor scram?
3. Was the faulty steam generator immediately isolated from the primary system?
4. How much time was required to equalize primary and secondary pressure?
5. Did the pressurizer go dry, i.e. drain completely?
6. Did a steam bubble form in the reactor outlet plenum?
7. Were fuel rods uncovered by a steam bubble in the reactor outlet plenum?
8. Was there damage to any fuel rods during this incident?
9. Were all primary pumps providing core cooling throughout the depressurization?
10. Did the primary pumps cavitate during depressurization?
11. Why was the ECCS not used to maintain primary system water inventory?
12. Was the NRC notified when the leak rate increased from 2 to 2.5 gallons/day?
13. What is the source term estimate for the steam released in terms of the quantity of its radioactive constituents?
14. Where did this radioactivity go?
15. What kinds of doses could people have received?