

Docket, Hearing

From: Shannon Gearhart [shannon.gearhart@gmail.com]
Sent: Saturday, September 15, 2012 11:56 PM
To: Siarnacki, Anne; Docket, Hearing
Subject: Objection to new Indian Point licenses/Relicensing

Dear Nuclear Regulatory Commissioners:

As a physician, public health professional and concerned citizen of New York City, I am writing you today to strongly **oppose** the relicensing of the Indian Point Reactors. Do we need to wait until a catastrophic event occurs to protect our community? As history as shown, nuclear reactors are vulnerable to several problems – natural disasters like the case of Fukushima, design flaws and operator error which was possibly the case in Chernobyl, build-up of radioactive waste, and potential terrorist attacks. Following the nuclear disaster of Fukushima, you, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, released a report ranking the likelihood of an earthquake to occur under each of the 104 commercially-operating nuclear reactors currently in the US. Indian Point was found to have the highest risk for an earthquake. The likelihood of an earthquake occurring under one of the nuclear reactors, leading to a meltdown of the nuclear core, is estimated at 1 in 10,000 each year.

If a catastrophic event occurs, there is no realistic way to evacuate the 17 million people who live within the recommended evacuation radius of 50 miles. Experience shows from Hurricane Katrina that evacuating even 1 million people with several days' notice is not feasible given our current emergency evacuation plans. Following a nuclear reactor catastrophe, thousands of acute and sub-acute injuries (predicted at 44,000 over the first year following the nuclear accident) would occur, overwhelming health care facilities and other social services. Within the 50 mile evacuation zone, it is likely that hundreds of hospitals would have to be shut-down given their high level of exposure. This could affect thousands of available hospital beds, making medical care even more difficult for the most critical patients. Tens of thousands of physicians, firefighters, and police officers would also be at out of commission due to their own exposure to high levels of radiation.

Even if a catastrophic event does not occur, there is still the ongoing release of radioactive waste into the environment, which pollutes our air, water and land – leading to increased health risks, especially for women, children, and the elderly – for current and future generations. There is no “safe” level of radiation.

A fundamental teaching in medicine is “prevention is better than cure.” There is no cure for a nuclear catastrophe. The only way to prevent the health consequences of a nuclear reactor accident is to shut down current nuclear power plants and stop the production of new ones.

Thank you,

Shannon Gearhart, MD

President, Physicians for Social Responsibility NYC chapter

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USNRC

September 17, 2012 (8:30 a.m.)

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ADJUDICATIONS STAFF