

January 7, 2016

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

Dear Congresswoman Lowey:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to your letter of December 11, 2015, expressing continuing interest in having an independent risk assessment conducted on the proposed gas pipeline project in the vicinity of the Indian Point Energy Center and urging us to support rehearing requests on the project before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Having personally read through a substantial volume of correspondence and met with a wide range of stakeholders, I recognize that there remain some significant differences of opinion regarding how the pipeline project may impact the safety of Indian Point. However, I remain confident that the NRC staff has conducted thorough, independent analysis of the impacts of this project on the Indian Point facility in determining that a potential rupture of the proposed pipeline would pose no threat to the safe operation or the safe shutdown of the plant, and I am satisfied that an additional risk assessment would not provide significant insight beyond those gained from the analysis already completed by the NRC.

Let me continue to assure you that the agency has thoroughly reviewed various concerns that have arisen regarding the Indian Point facility, including concerns about the proposed gas pipeline. As you may know, the licensee, Entergy Nuclear Operations, Inc. (Entergy), conducted a hazard analysis of the proposed pipeline, and the NRC staff conducted its own confirmatory analysis of the hazards posed by the pipeline. Both of those analyses concluded that the proposed pipeline would not jeopardize safe operation or shutdown of Indian Point Units 2 and 3.

Regarding requests for rehearing before FERC, I understand that FERC has received and is considering numerous stakeholder requests for reconsideration or rehearing of its decision on various issues, including the request, such as yours, for an independent analysis. Those requests are pending before FERC which has independent regulatory authority to decide whether to consider its earlier determinations.

I appreciate your input on this important matter. If you need additional information, please contact me or Eugene Dacus, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Stephen G. Burns