13. Nuclear

Immediately Close Nuclear Power Plants

Stacy Crandell

I want to see the nuke plants closed. As a taxpayer, I want my taxes to go towards renewable resources, towards smarter energy.

Chenango North Energy Awareness Group

We must retire nuclear power.

Michelle Teneyck

I would like to register my opposition to nuclear power.

New York Public Interest Research Group

This State Energy Plan also re-licenses all nuclear power plants in New York State. Given the potential for catastrophe, these plants should be closed down until proven safe.

Irmgard Seidler

No more nuclear and coal fired plants, and no more subsidies to polluting power producers.

Ann Link

Where is the section on nuclear energy? Indian Point should be decommissioned for two reasons: [1] poor safety records and [2] potential as a terrorist target. Indian Point is located twenty-five miles north of New York City. Twenty million people [8 percent of the U.S. population] live within a 50 mile radius of the plant. Brooklyn is especially vulnerable since we're on an island. Imagine over two million Brooklyn residents trying to evacuate south over the Verazzano Narrows Bridge in the event of a disaster from the north!

Environmental Advocates of New York

We feel the State should reduce its dependence on nuclear power and close Indian Point.

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Elizabeth Cunningham Smyth

Close down Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant.

Ron Kamen

Close down Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant.

Elinor Yahm

Close down Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant.

Green Party

The present draft State Energy Plan irresponsibly gives short shrift to the present dangers of nuclear energy generation. Instead, the immediate shutdown of the Indian Point Nuclear Station is recommended as a way of enhancing the draft State Energy Plan's accuracy.

Sierra Club, Long Island Group

The cost of the consequences of failing to manage the risks from these nuclear power plants is incalculable. We urge the closing of Indian Point power plant. Eight percent of the U.S. population live within a 50 mile radius of this plant and the evacuation plans only include a ten mile radius. That's ludicrous.

Riverkeeper, Inc.

The State Energy Plan should outline a strategy for the immediate closure and orderly decommissioning of the Indian Point nuclear power station.

Honorable Paul Feiner, Supervisor, Town of Greenburg

Close down Indian Point.

Scenic Hudson, Inc.

The Draft State Energy Plan should outline a scenario in anticipation of the closure of Indian Point. The State Energy Plan should analyze and lay out the steps necessary to provide adequate clean and uninterrupted power to Westchester County and New York City if Indian Point were to go off line.

Response: In light of the importance of the existing nuclear power plants to New York's electricity system, the Energy Plan calls for the continued safe operation of these facilities. See Section 1.3, Energy Policy Objectives and Recommendations, and Section 3.4, Electricity Resource Assessment, of the State Energy Plan.

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The State has limited regulatory authority with respect to nuclear power plants. The plants are licensed and regulated for health, safety, and environmental radiation protection purposes by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The State has traditionally regulated certain non-safety aspects of nuclear power plants, except those owned by New York Power Authority, through the Public Service Commission's regulation of electric utilities. However, within the last three years, all but one of the six operating nuclear power plants in the State have been sold to independent power producers.

The State Energy Plan establishes a vision for New York's future that supports economic growth and ensures a safe, healthy environment. In general, meeting the State's economic needs will require the equivalent of 5,000 to 7,000 megawatts more electricity generating capacity than is available today. While some of these requirements can be met through demand reduction measures and renewable energy resource electricity generation, the near-term closure of the State's nuclear power plants would seriously increase the need for new resources and dramatically weaken the reliability of New York's electricity system.

In brief, nuclear power produced about 20 percent of the electricity consumed in the State in 2000, or about 31,500 gigawatt hours of electricity. Nuclear power plants also provide about 5,000 megawatts of summer electricity generating capacity, which represented nearly 14 percent of the in-State capacity in 2000.

Nuclear power plants also contribute importantly to energy diversity, mitigating the State's dependence on fossil fuels, particularly imported petroleum. The growing concern regarding the State's dependence on natural gas for electricity generation is discussed in Section 3.5, Natural Gas Assessment, of the Energy Plan. Over-dependence on natural gas would be a problem if natural gas supplies were suddenly curtailed by events affecting either the production areas or the limited number of pipelines which transport this fuel to New York State. Also, natural gas prices have been particularly volatile, as witnessed during the winter of 2000-2001, when energy prices increased. Closing nuclear plants would likely exacerbate such concerns.

The two operating Indian Point nuclear power plants (Indian Point 2 and 3) have a combined summer electricity generation capacity of 1,935 megawatts. This represents 5.3 percent of the current total in-State summer electricity generation capacity and more than four times the generating capacity of the eleven gas turbines installed by the New York Power Authority in 2001. If both plants operate at maximum output for an entire year,

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they are capable of generating over 17,000 gigawatt hours of electricity, or approximately 11 percent of New York State's electricity requirements in 2000. Loss of these plants would seriously affect the State's ability to meet its generation capacity reserve margin requirement in the near term.

The State Energy Plan and the Energy Planning Board recognize the importance of ensuring that the State's nuclear power plants operate in the cleanest, safest manner possible. One of the State Energy Plan's five principal policy goals is the pledge to support the continued safe, secure, and reliable operation of the State's energy infrastructure. To this end, the Energy Plan calls for a study of the security of New York State energy infrastructure that will include a risk and vulnerabilities assessment. This effort has already begun. The State's new Office of Public Security, with the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, evaluated security at the Indian Point nuclear power plants and found security at the plants to be robust. The NRC is also conducting its own security reviews throughout the United States.

Federated Conservationists of Westchester County, Inc.

We believe the Indian Point 2 needs to be shut down and that shutdown has got to be factored into your planning. You cannot assume that plant is going to be there for as long as you have it in your projections.

Response: The State Energy Plan supports continued safe operation of nuclear power plants in the State.

Phase Out, Don't Re-license, Reduce Dependence on Nuclear Power Plants

Western New York Sustainable Energy Association

We must more closely scrutinize and reduce reliance on nuclear power. The Draft State Energy Plan suggests we will have the same amount of nuclear power capacity for the next twenty years, presumably from the same nuclear power plants which are already middle-aged. They're going to be older, less reliable. There's the danger of risk to the public health by safety problems. The plants are now in the hands of private owners who run them for profit and may cut corners on operation. And then there's concern about terrorism. I think there needs to be much greater scrutiny and concern about nuclear power. (See Response page 13-6.)

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Green Party Erie County

Please do as they did in Germany and call for the phase out of nuclear power within twenty years. It's imperative that we get away from this dirty and overly expensive power production. (See Response page 13-6.)

Cathy Cardell

I am a member of the Citizens Awareness Network and I am against nuclear power. I would like to see the State become really focused on developing alternative technologies. (See Response page 13-6.)

Sustainable Energy Alliance of Long Island

The Draft State Energy Plan should strive on a long-term basis to close down all existing nuclear power facilities over the next twenty years and replace their power generation with sustainable, clean, and safe alternative energy supplies such as solar, wind, biomass, and geothermal. (See Response page 13-6.)

Sierra Club, NYC Group

The Draft State Energy Plan does not include a much-needed program to eliminate our dependence on nuclear power. Nuclear power is known to be both costly and dangerous. Waste and radioactive emissions from these plants can cause serious environmental degradation and human, and other life-form, injury. Risk management in this area is extremely expensive; at times, it is even impossible. The Indian Point Plant should be closed and other nuclear plants should be phased out over time. (See Response page 13-6.)

Wendy Harris

The State really needs to provide clearer leadership and more tangible policy recommendations in terms of conservation, renewables, the cleaning up of current coal facilities, and the shutting down ultimately of nuclear in the State of New York.

There is no way you can defend against a suicide bomber's attack on it [nuclear power plant]. We need to eliminate the continuing use of nuclear and conservation is what I would hope that you approach in a meaningful way in policy in your Plan. I'm hoping you can bring more policy mandates to the State and its agencies and to industry in general in terms of conservation, renewability, and cleanliness. (See Response page 13-6.)

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L. A. Harris

The State Energy Plan relies too heavily on fossil fuels and nuclear power, while disregarding new, cleaner technologies. The State Energy Plan does nothing to phase out polluting power plants. (See Response page 13-6.)

Great Lakes United

New York State should commit to the phase out of nuclear and coal power stations on an accelerated schedule with phase out complete by 2020, beginning with the oldest and dirtiest stations first. No new construction of nuclear or coal stations should be permitted in the State or the region. (See Response page 13-6.)

Shawn McConnell

I do not think that our nuclear power plants [in the Oswego area] should be re-licensed. (See Response page 13-6.)

Erin Cala

We should not re-license nuclear power plants. Security issues are more important than ever and in order to have secure sources of energy, we must stop using nuclear power. Instead of relicensing nuclear plants and investing in clean coal technologies, we need to devote more money to sustainable renewable energy. (See Response page 13-6.)

Better Queens Environment (BQE)

BQE proposes a phase out for all nuclear facilities in the State, which now provide 9.2 percent of New York's energy, and a phase in of increased renewables to ten percent of the State's energy needs. (See Response page 13-6.)

Dr. Nina Evans, Dr. Richard Evans

We question the assumption by the State Energy Plan that the State's six commercial reactors will be re-licensed by the National Regulatory Commission (NRC).

The State Energy Plan must provide information about the safety and performance of nuclear facilities. With the initiatives already taken by the State in areas of renewables and efficiency we can create a sound policy that challenges the need for nuclear energy to meet our electric energy needs.

Response: See the State Energy Plan, Section 3.4, Electricity Resource Assessment, and the response on page 13-2 for discussions of the importance of nuclear-powered electricity generation to New York's energy future. As noted in the above cited

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Assessment, in formulating a Reference Resource Scenario, it was assumed that all operating nuclear power plants in New York would continue to operate during the full 20-year energy planning period. This assumption was based in part on the fact that 8 of the 103 operating nuclear power plants in the United States have already received 20-year license extensions from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Further, the Nuclear Energy Institute, a nuclear industry trade organization, has stated that almost all operating U.S. nuclear plants will eventually apply for such license extensions. Such license extensions are predicated on a finding by the NRC that the particular plant seeking license extension can and will continue to operate in a manner that fully protects public health and safety, and the environment.

Nuclear Power Plants – Security Concerns

Sierra Club, NYC Group

Security analyses for each of the State's nuclear power plants are necessary and should be conducted without further delay.

Riverkeeper, Inc.

The New York State Energy Planning Board must be vigilant on nuclear safety and security issues and make recommendations for improving safety performance and security measures.

Riverkeeper supports the State Energy Planning Board's objective to initiate a study of the security of New York's energy infrastructure. However, we feel that the State Energy Plan should incorporate basic steps to better protect the State's nuclear power plants.

We understand that the NYS Office of Public Security has already issued a number of recommendations. It is unclear whether the NYS Office of Public Security was contacted for their recommendations on protecting the State's nuclear power plants for inclusion in the Draft State Energy Plan. We recommend that the NYS Office of Public Security's findings on nuclear power plant security be presented in the State Energy Plan.

Stop the Barge

The uncovered and unfortified spent rod pools that have been planned on being evacuated to Yucca Mountain for the past ten years must be considered. Each of these uncovered pools is a potential disaster. Nowhere on the East Coast is there enough distance from a plant to ignore the possibility of a nuclear disaster in a terrorist attack. We

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must be 100 percent sure that the reactors can withstand dynamite, airplane attack, and other forms of disaster before nuclear power plants are re-licensed.

Response: The Energy Planning Board explicitly recognizes the need to take a hard look at the security of the State's energy infrastructure, as evidenced by the State Energy Plan's recommendation that the State initiate a study of the security of New York's energy infrastructure used for production, storage, and delivery, and that the study include a risk and vulnerabilities assessment and make recommendations for appropriate actions. The Planning Board suggests that the study be conducted cooperatively by the Office of Public Security, the Energy Planning Board agencies, and major energy market participants.

But even before this recommendation was formulated, the State had begun to address security at the nuclear power plants. See the discussion in Section 3.4, Electricity Resource Assessment, for more details. As noted there, an evaluation of security at the Indian Point nuclear power plants was performed by the New York State Office of Public Security, with the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The results of that assessment have been provided to State and federal authorities, including members of the State Energy Planning Board. A press release, describing the general findings and some of the areas addressed by the evaluation, was issued on December 12, 2001 and is available on the New York State web site (www.state.ny.us/index.html). For necessary security and safeguard purposes, the details of that report have not been publicly released.

Emergency Preparedness at Nuclear Power Plants

Star Foundation

The emergency planning law needs to be overhauled and modified because right now emergency planning on Eastern Long Island is a joke. Eastern Long Island is just outside the ten mile radius [for the Millstone Nuclear Plant site]. No specific plans for that area and it's laughable because Long Islanders are extremely aware of that and the lack of planning is really egregious.

New York Public Interest Research Group

In the wake of the terrorist attacks on September 11, New York State needs to seriously reevaluate the safety of the communities surrounding these plants. Serious examination of the effectiveness of their evacuation plans needs to be undertaken.

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New York State Sustainable Energy Coalition (NYS-SEC) *et al.*; Stop the Barge; State Environmental Justice Alliance

The draft plan proposes relicensing all nuclear power plants in New York State. Given the terrorist attacks of September 11, New York needs to seriously reevaluate the safety of communities living near nuclear facilities, which includes a serious examination of the effectiveness of the evacuation plans at nuclear facilities. Given the potential for catastrophe, these plants should be closed until proven safe.

Honorable Kathryn Ellsworth, Mayor, Village of Montebello

The village supports legislation that would continue to evaluate the Indian Point evacuation plan.

Response: The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have established comprehensive emergency preparedness requirements for nuclear power plants which include close coordination between the plant operators and local and State government emergency response organizations. Since 1980, each operator of a commercial nuclear power plant in the United States has been required to have both an on-site and off-site emergency response plan as a condition for obtaining and maintaining a license to operate the plant. On-site emergency response plans are approved by the NRC. Off-site plans (which are closely coordinated with the utility's on-site emergency response plan) are evaluated by the FEMA and the results are provided to the NRC. The State regularly participates in emergency drills for these plans, as do all the affected counties. Such drills are periodically evaluated by NRC and FEMA, which agencies have approved the emergency plans for all of the nuclear power plants in the State and the Millstone plants in Connecticut.

The New York State Emergency Management Office (SEMO) and the New York State Department of Health serve as the lead State agencies for nuclear power plant emergency preparedness. In light of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, SEMO has requested NRC and FEMA to conduct a comprehensive review of federal standards for emergency plans at nuclear power plants.

Specific Recommendations – Nuclear Power

Great Lakes United

Nuclear utilities should be required to set aside funds now for waste management and decommissioning.

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Response: Nuclear power plant operators are required by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), as a condition for licensing and operation, to establish and maintain the financial capability to safely terminate operation and decommission their respective facilities. All of the nuclear power plants in New York State have established dedicated funds for this purpose. The plant operators also pay a fee, related specifically to the amount of electricity generated, into the federal High-Level Waste Fund to support the development and operation of repository for spent nuclear fuel.

Riverkeeper, Inc.

The State Energy Plan conspicuously omits any discussion of the New York nuclear power industry. One of the objectives of the State Energy Plan is to provide "broad statewide energy policy direction." However the Draft State Energy Plan provides energy policy makers with no direction on nuclear energy policy.

The little nuclear energy related information that the State Energy Planning Board has divulged is the assumption that the State's six commercial reactors will be re-licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

The State Energy Plan must provide existing information to the State's energy policy makers about the State's nuclear power industry and provide the means for which more information on nuclear safety performance, environmental and public health externalities, and nuclear plant security can be gathered and presented. The State Energy Plan Board should not simply rely on federal regulators to monitor the two commercial power reactions at Indian Point nuclear power station and New York's other four commercial reactors. Nor should the State Energy Plan Board or any State agency rely on the private operators to police themselves.

Response: A discussion of the role of nuclear power plants in the State electricity system and related issues is included in Section 3.4, Electricity Resource Assessment, of the State Energy Plan.

Star Foundation

The most glaring omission [in the State Energy Plan] in the area of nuclear power is that there needs to be more financial oversight by the State. Reactors are primarily being bought up by and owned by limited liability corporations, and the State needs to take a much larger role in overseeing these and making sure that financial due diligence is pursued. We need to take this seriously because there are going to be so many layers of

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protection for these people that ultimately it's going to be the taxpayers of the State left holding a big part of that bag.

Response: The State has traditionally regulated financial aspects of nuclear power plants through the New York State Public Service Commission's (PSC) regulation of electric utilities. Within the last three years, all but one of the six operating nuclear power plants in the State have been sold to independent power producers. These sales were reviewed and approved by the PSC as prudent actions and consistent with the State's objective of establishing a competitive wholesale electricity market. Nuclear power plants continue to fall under the jurisdiction of the PSC even after being sold.

The nuclear power plant sales were also reviewed and approved by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) which specifically evaluated the new owners' financial ability to meet the NRC regulatory requirements for protecting public health and safety. The NRC also requires that each plant owner establish and maintain dedicated funds sufficient to safely close and decommission the plants, even if such closure occurs before its previously scheduled date.

New owners have a strong incentive to make safety their primary focus. Failure to adequately maintain facilities and procedures may lead to interruptions in plant operations, thereby producing no revenue to offset continued, expensive operating costs. Experience to date suggests that new owners have improved the work practices of the existing labor force as evidenced by recent improvements in plant safety, reliability, and production performance. In the past, when nuclear plant operation faltered due to ineffective management, lengthy and costly prudence proceedings were held to determine whether ratepayers overpaid for their electricity. Today, nuclear plant owners no longer have the protection offered by traditional rate regulation. In New York State, nuclear plants must cover all costs by revenues received.

Convert Indian Points 2 and 3 to Natural Gas

Green Party

That is something we definitely need to look into, the concept of converting Indian Point into a gas powered facility.

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