



RIVERKEEPER.

Chairman Dale Klein
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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FAX: 301-415-1672

July 11, 2007

Dear Chairman Klein:

Riverkeeper and the below listed nongovernmental organizations formally request that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission grant every community facing a license renewal process for their local nuclear reactor the same rights recently granted to the community living near the Indian Point nuclear power plant located in Buchanan, New York.

Specifically, we request that for all pending and future relicensing applications, the generic informational public meeting on the NRC relicensing process be separated from the environmental scoping meeting, so that those communities hosting nuclear power plants have the same opportunity for public participation as that recently provided for Indian Point and other nuclear reactors prior to the NRC decision in August 2006 that combined these two meetings into one.

On May 2, 2007, Riverkeeper wrote a letter to the Commission formally requesting the reinstatement of its earlier policy requiring separate meetings for environmental scoping and the license renewal process. On May 29, Riverkeeper was informed that our request would be granted for the Indian Point license renewal process. Based on subsequent correspondence and face to face communications, however, it was made clear that this change in policy would only apply to Indian Point.

On June 13, 2007, Riverkeeper reiterated our request that separate meetings be held for all communities facing a relicensing process during an NRC – Riverkeeper meeting in Tarrytown, New York. At that meeting, P.T. Kuo, Director of the Division of License Renewal, indicated that the NRC was not prepared to reinstate its previous policy but that should a community request separate meetings, the NRC would consider its request. Riverkeeper then asked if the NRC would issue a press release informing communities of the need to request separate meetings. Rani Franovich, Chief of the Environmental Branch B, replied in the negative. In addition, Riverkeeper received a letter on June 26, 2007, from J. E. Dyer, Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, stating that “the NRC staff has decided that for the Indian Point license renewal application, it will

hold a separate information meeting near the plant to discuss the license renewal process.”

These responses are completely unacceptable. At a time when the NRC is attempting to improve its public image and increase public confidence in its ability to oversee the nuclear industry, limiting public participation in a crucial process such as the relicensing of a nuclear power plant does little to increase public faith in the agency charged with protecting public health and safety regarding the operation of nuclear facilities.

We live in a society based on democratic principles. The public must have the opportunity to participate fully in the democratic process, particularly when it comes to obtaining information on government agency actions that affect their lives. When it comes to “saving resources,” cutting back on public participation should be the last place NRC looks to save money, not the first. Every community deserves equal treatment from a federal agency, and the NRC’s current willy-nilly approach to public relicensing meetings is a flawed policy that disenfranchises the public-at-large in the most egregious fashion.

Therefore, we urge the NRC to reinstate its prior policy regarding public participation in relicensing reviews effective immediately.

We look forward to a prompt response from your office to our request.

Sincerely,



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CC: Annette Vietti-Cook, Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Jim Dyer, Office Director, Nuclear Reactor Regulation
P.T. Kuo, Director, Division of License Renewal
Rani Franovich, Chief, Environmental Branch B
Bo Pham, Project Manager of Indian Point Relicensing

U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety

Senator Thomas R. Carper (Chairman)
Senator Lamar Alexander
Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton
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