

Prepared Statement
Paul Blanch
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Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I want to thank the members of the public, the NRC/Entergy personnel and elected officials for their participation this evening.

My Name is Paul Blanch and I reside in West Hartford Connecticut. I am an energy consultant with more than 40 years of nuclear power experience. I have previously been employed at Indian Point Unit 2 reporting to the Chief Nuclear Officers of both ConEd and Entergy.

I have been a consultant to the New York Attorney General's Office opposing the relicensing of the Indian Point reactors. I have been named as an expert witness for at least three contentions before the Atomic Safety Licensing Board. My statements tonight are my own and do not reflect the positions of any of my employers or previous employers including those of the New York Attorney General's Office. Like the NRC's and Entergy's ground water initiatives, my work is strictly voluntary.

I am personally appalled and insulted that both the NRC and Entergy have now resorted to name calling and blame shifting instead of addressing vital nuclear safety issues such as the high pressure natural gas lines running across the Indian Point site. The NRC and Entergy are actively suppressing information related to the failure of vital buried pipes and the release of thousands, and likely millions of gallons, of unmonitored and unquantified radioactive water to the environment over many years.

On Monday April 19, the NRC conducted public meeting in Brattleboro, Vermont. During this meeting Mr. Collins of the NRC was questioned about the near miss related to the corrosion of the reactor vessel head at Davis Besse nuclear plant. Rather than Mr. Collins acknowledging multiple regulatory failures by the NRC he attempted to rewrite history and blame the numerous NRC failures on three engineers employed by the utility. Contrary to Mr. Collins' statement about these persons they, were not indicted or convicted of CAUSING the accident as inferred by Mr. Collins. His statements appear to be an attempt by the NRC to shift the root cause away from the NRC's complete and total failure to properly regulate Davis Besse and the nuclear industry. Mr. Collin's statements are in conflict with various independent investigation of the event.

In addition to the NRC's feeble attempt to distort history, Entergy reached a new low point and has embarked on a campaign of "Name Calling" in an apparent attempt to discredit and personally attack my credibility and "its opponents" rather than openly addressing the nuclear safety issues. The national media recently reported:

Larry Smith, spokesman for Vermont Yankee, says its opponents won't listen to reason: "They're hippies from the '60s who want to be against something, and it's (sic) nuclear power."

This undignified statement with demeaning intentions was made in reference to the attendees at Monday's Vermont Yankee's public NRC meeting. I am not sure what Mr. Smith was doing in the 60's but I was actively serving my country in the Navy for seven years in the 60's and an additional 21 years in the United States Navy reserves. I am hurt, offended and repulsed that Entergy executives are reaching a new low point to protect its profits while it continues to place the general public at extreme risk.

On February 15, 2009, Entergy discovered a rupture of a vital buried pipe at Indian Point Unit 2. This pipe rupture resulted in the only safety system used to cool the reactor in the event of a reactor trip, to become inoperable. The pipe rupture resulted in the release of thousands (and possibly millions) of gallons of radioactive water to the environment. This event was never formally reported¹ to the public by the NRC or Entergy. Neil Sheehan, spokesperson for the NRC, stated:

"We also did not issue a PN (Public Notification?) on the issue given the limited public interest regarding the leakage."

Millions of gallons of tritiated water were released to the environment and IP-2 operated for 7 days without any safety system capable of cooling the core in the event of a normal reactor trip. There was "limited public interest"²

I believe this event and the subsequent fraudulent documents produced by Entergy and reviewed/approved by the NRC should outrage the general public and the elected officials.

¹ Formal reports of this event, as required by NRC regulations, cannot be located within the NRC public records

² Email from Neil Sheehan to Paul Blanch dated March 24, 2009.

These issues are very significant and pose an extreme risk to the general public however; they are dwarfed by the unanalyzed risk posed by the natural gas supply lines for most of New England. Most people (including NRC and Entergy personnel) are not aware that these 30 and 26 inch diameter gas lines, operating at about 700 pounds of pressure, traverse the entire Indian Point site from the Hudson River to Broadway and are located within feet of vital nuclear systems³, structures, and components.

The energy released from a rupture of these lines could exceed the energy released from the atomic weapons dropped on Japan in 1945. The collateral damage to the nuclear plants is unimaginable and has never been analyzed. Most NRC and Entergy personnel are not even aware of the consequences of this potential disaster. The IP licensee and the NRC have determined that this event is not credible without any supporting evidence other than a 1994 letter from Algonquin Gas Company⁴. I am not aware of any Indian Point emergency procedures to respond to this type of event. There are no NRC requirements to assure the integrity of these potentially explosive gas lines. I am not aware of any other industrial site in the entire world that presents more risk than this gas/nuclear combination.

In closing I recommend that Entergy, concentrate on the real safety issues instead of resorting to personal attacks and name calling of members of the general public. The NRC must return to its mandate to provide reasonable assurance to protect the general public, rather than attempting to distort history, promote nuclear energy and mislead the public.

Nuclear reactors and major natural gas transmission lines are incompatible when co-located on the same site.

I strongly urge elected national and local appointed officials, members of the public, realistically consider the true risks and consequences of the continued operation of the Indian Point reactors. We must determine if the risk to New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Westchester County is offset by any perceived benefit from the continued operation of the Indian Point nuclear plants.

³ The Algonquin gas line crosses the water lines for emergency core cooling in the event of the loss of the Emergency/Auxiliary Feedwater System. The gas lines also cross all sources for offsite power to all reactors.

⁴ FOIA 2010-0188 NRC does not have a copy of this letter in its possession.