



It was Tuesday, May 8, 2012, in the early morning, a small group carrying large yellow and black signs stood their ground in front of the main gates of the Indian Point nuclear power plant.



BUCHANAN, NY -- A week before the NRC annual safety assessment for Indian Point, a small group carrying large yellow and black signs stood their ground in front of the main gates of the nuclear reactors. It was early morning, Tuesday, May 8, 2012, and the group wanted the attention of the three Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) judges about to tour Entergy's nuclear complex. The protestors' message? The local community objects to renewing the plant's operating license for another 20 years. At about 7:30 am, the judges arrived in an SUV that pulled up to the gates. Those holding signs were asked by armed security guards to stand across the road from Entergy property. The group moved, choosing a vantage point that squarely faced the judicial entourage.

"We are standing here today to show the ASLB judges that the community cares about re-licensing Indian Point," said Gary Shaw of IPSEC (Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition). "The licensing process is limited and ignores common sense."

Entergy submitted their license renewal application in 2007 for the twin reactors, units two and three. Unit one was mothballed in the 1974. The application saw an unprecedented number of contentions, the largest number filed in the history of the NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission). Among the spate of contentions were those filed by New York State, the NY Attorney General's office, and the Town of Cortlandt. The administrative judges included Lawrence G. McDade, Dr. Richard E. Wardwell, and Michael F. Kennedy. The tour was led by Fred Dacimo. Entergy's Vice President of License Renewal.

According to NRC spokesperson [Neil Sheehan](#) , the tour for the ASLB judges and groups opposing the relicensing are common. "The judges handling each respective hearing decide whether a visit to the site in question would further their understanding of the issues. In this case, they decided a visit would be beneficial, especially given the number of contentions being considered and their complexity." Sheehan added that the judges would not issue any report based on their visit. □□ Sites on the tour included the reactor building, the plant's water intakes and discharges on the [Hudson River](#) , unit 2 spent fuel pool, the location of safety-related buried pipes and tanks external to plant buildings, external access vaults for viewing inaccessible cables, groundwater monitoring and external transformers, among others.

"The spent fuel pool seemed really murky to me," said environmentalist Manna Jo Greene. "We were three feet away from the pool and you couldn't even see the racks or the assemblies holding the spent fuel."

Initial ground rules made it clear that certain questions could not be asked, said Greene. "We were constrained and we were supposed to ask questions only through the judges. It was part of the legal process. We could ask for clarification but we couldn't ask 'why?'"

Overall, Greene said the judges were impressed with the facility. "It was very clean and there was a high level of security. The judges were very pleased and appreciative and they said all their questions had been addressed."

There have been 154 contentions filed with the NRC by 15 governmental agencies and locally concerned groups. The ASLB judges, denied most of the contentions and whittled the number down to about 20. Remaining contentions cite the ecological impacts of the 2.5 billion gallons of Hudson River water Indian Point uses every day for cooling water that kills billions of fish, many which are already in serious decline. One contention filed concerns radioactive material from the ground water under the plant leaching into the Hudson River that would seemingly threaten the proposed desalination plant [United Water](#) wants to build directly across the river. The desalination plant would supply water to Rockland and Haverstraw. Another unique contention has been filed concerning environmental justice issues where people with disabilities, those in hospitals, nursing homes and prisons, may have difficulty accessing transportation in the event of evacuation.

--

Abby Luby

[914 671 9590](tel:9146719590)

www.abbylu.com

www.nuclearromance.wordpress.com