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Contact: Neil Sheehan, 610-337-5331

NRC Issues Supplement to Final Environmental Study For Indian Point Nuclear Plant License Renewal Application

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a supplement to the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) it prepared for the Indian Point nuclear power plant license renewal application. The update to the earlier assessment released in December 2010 incorporates new information about possible impacts of the Buchanan, N.Y., facility on the aquatic environment.

Among the new information identified since the FSEIS was issued are:

- Additional details provided by the plant's owner, Entergy Nuclear Operations Inc., on impingement and entrainment field data units of measure. (Impingement refers to the trapping of fish and other aquatic organisms against intake screens by the force of the water being drawn through a cooling water intake structure, while entrainment refers to the drawing of small aquatic organisms through a cooling water intake structure into the cooling system of a power plant.) There has been a significant decline in estimated entrainment losses under a revised analysis.
- Comments provided by Entergy on the field data units of measure regarding the Essential Fish Habitat Assessment for the plant.
- New studies completed by Entergy and submitted to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation characterizing the plant's thermal plume in the Hudson River. (Thermal plume refers to the area of the river affected by discharges of warm water from the plant.) Based on the studies and the Department of Environmental Conservation's review of them, the NRC staff concludes the impacts from heat shock to aquatic resources in the lower Hudson River would be "small." Small in this context means the environmental effects are not detectable or are so minor that they will neither destabilize nor noticeably alter any important attribute of the resource.

The supplement also documents the completion of a consultation process between the NRC and the National Marine Fisheries Service regarding the shortnose sturgeon and the Atlantic sturgeon population in vicinity of Indian Point. The new analysis finds the impact of the plant's continued operation on those species would be "small."

Indian Point is the site of two pressurized-water reactors. The initial 40-year operating license for Indian Point Unit 2 is set to expire on Sept. 28, 2013, while the initial license for Indian Point Unit 3 runs through Dec. 12, 2015. Entergy is seeking a 20-year license extension for each unit. It submitted an application to the NRC seeking the license renewals on April 23, 2007.

As part of its review of the application, the NRC performed a detailed assessment of potential environmental impacts if the plant continues to operate for the extended periods of time. During this review, the NRC solicited comments from the public, local officials and representatives of state and federal agencies and tribal governments. The FSEIS, totaling more than 2,000 pages, was published on Dec. 3, 2010.

A draft version of the FSEIS supplement was issued on June 26, 2012. Eight organizations and/or individuals submitted comments to the NRC on the report. Those comments are addressed in the final report.

The Indian Point license renewal application, the FSEIS and the supplement are available on the NRC's [website](#).