



Both sides in Indian Point cooling tower issue state their case

CORTLANDT MANOR – Opponents of the Indian Point nuclear power plant Tuesday told the state Department of Environmental Conservation the plant should be required to build cooling towers to process the intake of millions of gallons of Hudson River water.

Supporters of the plant said those towers would be too costly, change the viewshed permanently, and cost jobs.

The DEC, which issued a preliminary ruling earlier this year calling for the cooling towers and refusing to provide the certification necessary for the Indian Point relicensing to move forward, heard the testimony in Cortlandt Manor before it makes its final decision.



The two hearings, Tuesday, drew large crowds

Ultimately, the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission makes the decision on whether the plants should be relicensed for another 20 years.

Clearwater Environmental Justice Associate Karla Raimundi said that because 10 out of 13 Hudson River fish species remain in steady decline, the DEC has ruled that the outmoded once-through cooling system that the Indian Point facility has been using must be converted to a closed cycle cooling system. This conversion, she said, would reduce fish mortality by decreasing the amount of intake screen impingement and thermal pollution.

According to Marilyn Elie of the Westchester Citizens Awareness Network and Indian Point Safe Energy Coalition, research done by the DEC shows that Indian Point is the largest user of water in the state consuming 2.5 billion gallons per day and that implementing cooling towers would reduce this usage by 95 percent as well as reduce the amount of fish killed by 95 percent.

A less costly and less visible alternative to cooling towers has been proposed by Entergy that would sit below the water level and essentially be an upgrade to the system that is already in place, said Indian Point spokesman Jerry Nappi. He explained that these “wedge wire screens” would cost about \$200 million to put in place and would protect a more significant amount of fish, their eggs, and larva.

“We don’t feel that cooling towers are right for this region. Cooling towers would be enormous structures sited right on the banks of the Hudson River. There would be two of them, each the size of Yankee Stadium, and they each emit 100 tons of particulate air pollution each year into the atmosphere.”

Additional concerns were raised Tuesday evening about the installation of cooling towers due to the fact that the plant would need to be shut down for almost a year.

Paul Steidler of the NY Affordable Reliable Electricity Alliance stated that the DEC has not done the research to ascertain the job loss or rise in electricity rates that would occur as a result of the plant's inactivity.

Spokesperson for the Coalition of Labor for Energy and Jobs Jerry Connolly said that the proposal made by the DEC is not in the best economic interest of the region nor is it beneficial to the competitiveness of NY State in the energy industry.