

March 20, 2020

RE: Actions Needed Today to Reduce Impact of COVID-19 on NYC Electrical Grid

Dear Governor Cuomo,

This letter is to alert your Administration and the City of New York that an unforeseen consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic is its likely impact on the reliability of the electric grid serving the New York City metropolitan area, **and actions needed to be taken now to reduce these risks.**

Blackouts anywhere/anytime are at best an inconvenience, but today they dramatically worsen the angst and economic pressure already being felt across the nation. In **New York City**, the loss of electric service has **unusually dire consequences** due to its densely populated urban setting.

With the near certainty that this pandemic will spread further in the metro area, a blackout would profoundly increase risks to the public's safety and health - and could lead to panic.

We know that your primary concern is the health and safety of your constituents and that it was the key consideration in your decision to postpone local elections. In this current environment, and especially over the next few months, **the State also needs to be especially vigilant in protecting the electric grid. Any actions that might degrade the grid's reliability must be avoided.**

Consequently, we urge you to postpone the scheduled permanent shutdown of the Indian Point Unit 2 (IP-2) nuclear facility next month. An agreement reached in 2017 calls for shutting down IP-2 in April 2020. However, that is coincident to when the City may be facing maximum stress from the pandemic. Thanks to a prescient clause included in the 2017 agreement, the shutdown can be delayed in the event of an "energy emergency."

We ask you to invoke this emergency clause and keep IP-2 in operation or, at a minimum, put it into a standby mode with its operating license intact and the ability to be brought back online quickly if needed.

The electric power market in Southern New York is exceptionally complex. Shutting down IP-2 (it generates 25% of Southern NY's power) will significantly increase that region's already high dependence on gas-fired electrical generation. These gas power plants are all fueled via a constrained long-distance transmission network¹ which may experience problems over the next few months².

With the advent of the coronavirus and recent disruptions in the oil & gas industry, New York City will likely face large unanticipated swings in electrical demand and supply, **availability of fuels, manpower, and other resources. We must act now to minimize potential problems.**

The energy emergency provision should be utilized ASAP to assure that there is sufficient time to maintain IP- 2's generating capacity over the next few months. Because of the way nuclear plants are designed, the reactor's core still has ample fuel and can be configured to run several additional

1 - There has been strong public resistance to expansion of the already-constrained gas pipeline system. Shutting down IP2 put will cause immediate and significant increases in volumetric demand on that system as increased gas-fired generation fills in for the nuclear unit's no-longer available power

2 - Unprecedented drops in the price of oil/gas are putting tremendous financial pressure on oil and gas companies, some of which may have to cease fracking operations and reduce workforce, putting further strain on the operation, upkeep and maintenance of the interstate gas transmission system

months if needed before new fuel is required. However, the logistics may take some time to work out and keeping the plant in operation will require coordination with the plant's owner, Entergy, and possibly the NRC. We are not trying to be alarmist, but believe it is within your power to avoid a potentially severe problem if you act now.

New York Energy and Climate Advocacy is a group of scientists, engineers and professionals offering to help New York State optimize its energy resources and policies. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns, as we are here to assist you and the various agencies and authorities entrusted with providing safe and reliable electricity in New York.

Sincerely,

New York Energy & Climate Advocacy

Thank you for your prompt attention and proactive action on this matter critical to New York's future. We are available at your disposal to help resolve this issue. Please contact us at the below addresses.

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