



Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

724 Wolcott Avenue, Beacon, NY 12508
(845) 265-8080 • FAX (206) 350-5680
www.Clearwater.org

Media Contacts:

Erin Macchiaroli, Communications x 7100
Commun@Clearwater.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 4, 2020

Clearwater Stands in Opposition to Indian Point's License Transfer to Holtec

BEACON, NY – The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) recently approved the transfer of Indian Point's licenses to a subsidiary of Holtec International for decommissioning, without addressing the concerns and objections of citizens' groups and officials including New York's Congressional delegation, Attorney General, and Governor Cuomo. Clearwater shares their concerns and opposes Holtec taking over Indian Point.

Holtec's record on nuclear plant decommissioning and spent fuel handling is a sorry one. It includes:

- Leveraging public moneys for its own profit without bringing any of its own to decommissioning work;
- Using a subsidiary structured to be able to declare bankruptcy and allow Holtec to leave decommissioning work at Indian Point half done and walk away without incurring liability, leaving the State and municipalities to bear the costs and risks;
- Using its own flawed and gouged casks for dry storage of spent fuel -- casks whose design Holtec changed in safety-relevant ways without seeking NRC permission;
- A near-miss accident in transferring spent fuel to its dry casks, which could have resulted in a severe radiological release at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station in California;
- Indicating it would do nothing to remediate known radioactive contamination of groundwater and the Hudson, would remediate contaminated soil only superficially, and envisioned shipping highly radioactive spent fuel down the Hudson by barge;
- Cutting costs and corners, such as excluding trained union workers and hiring unskilled workers for safety-critical tasks like pipe fitting in order to save money.

In addition, Holtec has denigrated and ignored input from citizen advisory panels and sued Lacey Township, New Jersey (home to the Oyster Creek nuclear plant) to assert that the company need not comply with town regulations such as building permits. The track record of Holtec and its partner company SNC-Lavalin includes repeated bribery and fraud convictions, and Holtec getting barred by the Tennessee Valley Authority and the World Bank. Holtec is currently under criminal investigation for lying to officials in New Jersey.

Conflicts of interest and a high potential for self-dealing regarding its side businesses, heighten the risk that Holtec will make decisions prioritizing its profits over public health and safety. Holtec's sidelines include a "consolidated interim storage" facility for spent nuclear fuel it is trying to license in New

Mexico, which would entail risks in shipping spent – but still highly radioactive -- fuel across the country, and building small modular reactors (SMRs) which could be fueled with reprocessed spent fuel.

The New York Congressional delegation wrote repeatedly to the NRC complaining that it had ignored petitions to intervene on license transfer and demanding that hearings be held to address concerns about Holtec becoming Indian Point's licensee before it approved the transfer or granted Holtec an exemption to use the decommissioning trust fund for spent fuel management (which would enable it to pocket hundreds of millions of dollars in ratepayer funds). The NRC approved the transfer and exemption without holding hearings, overruling/ignoring contentions filed by Clearwater and other citizens' groups critical of Holtec's qualifications.

NRC approval is not the last word in the matter. New York State can and should assert legitimate jurisdiction over the Indian Point license transfer and key decommissioning decisions. That includes the NYS Public Service Commission reviewing Holtec's application for license transfer and giving or withholding its sign-off. The fact the NRC has so blatantly stonewalled New York's concerns should be given weight in the State approval process.

Clearwater agrees with Governor Cuomo's statement: "Cleaning up Indian Point will be complicated and expensive, and for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to act without considering New York's request for a hearing is unacceptable and denies New Yorkers the public and transparent process they deserve... We are considering all options at our disposal to see that the shutdown of this facility protects the public's health and the environment."

New York Attorney General Letitia James has also filed a petition to intervene in Indian Point license transfer to Holtec, saying, "Putting the decommissioning of Indian Point in the hands of a company with no experience and uncertain financial resources is very risky. I am committed to ensuring that New York is granted full participation in this application proceeding and all other decision-making related to Indian Point's decommissioning."

Should the NRC refuse to adjudicate New Yorkers' contentions against transferring Indian Point's licenses to Holtec, there is legal recourse through the courts. It's also highly appropriate for the NYS Public Service Commission to adjudicate the license transfer.

Clearwater believes NRC stonewalling and Holtec's track record of malfeasance and poor performance at other sites must be weighed in New York State's decision regarding the license transfer to Holtec. Clearwater Board President, Steve Stanne, "Clearwater urges the Governor and the PSC to reject it. Indian Point decommissioning is much too sensitive, difficult, and dangerous a matter, impacting the health and safety of many millions, as well as the Hudson River, to be entrusted to an unqualified, untrustworthy company such as Holtec. New York can and must do better."

About Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

Launched in 1969 by legendary folk singer and activist Pete Seeger, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater has been at the forefront of the environmental movement as champions of the Hudson River. To date, more than half a million people have experienced their first real look at an estuary's ecosystem aboard the sloop Clearwater. Clearwater has become the grassroots model for producing positive changes to protect our planet. For more information, visit www.clearwater.org.