

# Indian Point Decommissioning: What You Need to Know

**The Indian Point nuclear power plant located in Buchanan, New York, is scheduled to close on April 30, but that does not mean that the threat of harmful nuclear exposure is gone. Your involvement will be key to facilitating the safest decommissioning process possible for our environment and for our communities.**

**Our Purpose** is to inform the public, local officials, community organizations, and vulnerable populations of the potential danger ahead in order to ensure representation from Environmental Justice (EJ) communities. **Our goal is to develop partnerships with organizations representing those communities to enable them to provide active and effective input ensuring the safest possible decommissioning with a just and equitable transition for plant workers and sustainable economic development for impacted communities.**

We do not yet know exactly when the decommissioning process will begin, but it is a very complex and potentially dangerous process for the following reasons:

## 1. Concerns Surrounding Decommissioning Companies

Holtec International is seeking the license for Indian Point's decommissioning. In spite of their disreputable track record, lack of experience, and dangerous long-term plans, the license transfer application is currently being considered by the NYS Public Service Commission and much concern has been expressed about this matter. After taking public comment on the proposed application to transfer Indian Point Licenses from Entergy to Holtec, the Public Service Commission and other stakeholders recently released a Joint Proposal negotiated with Holtec, which can be read [here](#). Issues raised during public comment included Holtec's:

- Long-standing, well-documented history of bribery, corruption and malfeasance
- Questionable financial solvency
- History of putting profit over safety
- Lack of experience doing decommissioning
- Unjust plans to store nuclear waste in First Nation and Latinx communities in New Mexico

Other decommissioning companies exist, including Energy Solutions, which decommissioned Zion in Illinois, and Orano/North Star, which decommissioned Vermont Yankee.

## 2. Communities at Risk

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation designated several areas near Indian Point as **Potential Environmental Justice Areas (PEJAs)**. The decommissioning process presents amplified risks to these PEJAs *already* stressed by Covid-19 and a lack of resources.

Environmental Justice Communities at risk include:

- Peekskill and Ossining
- Haverstraw and Nyack
- Greater NYC metropolitan area and Yonkers
- Newburgh and Beacon
- Kingston and Poughkeepsie

### **3. Chances for contamination will continue after Indian Point ceases operation**

- Soil and groundwater at Indian Point are heavily contaminated with radioactive isotopes which can easily seep into surrounding communities.
- Waste storage on-site remains a danger due to possible fuel pool fires, cask failures, and loading accidents when transferring spent fuel.
- Barging contaminated materials down the Hudson River poses a risk to both downstream and upstream communities. As the high-level nuclear waste is transported across the country, it will continue to threaten the safety of EJ populations in under-represented cities and rural areas.
- We are not prepared for any widespread nuclear exposure.

## **FAQ's**

### **Why did Indian Point need to close?**

- Long-term radiation exposure from nuclear plant emissions increases cancer risk.
- Indian Point's "once-through" cooling system, along with the thermal pollution it generated, killed 300 billion Hudson River fish, eggs and larvae each year.
- The nuclear energy industry emits 4-5 times more carbon dioxide than renewables.
- While operating, Indian Point created nearly 2,000 tons of highly radioactive waste, which, without a national repository for disposal, built up on site.
- Indian Point contaminated our air, groundwater and the Hudson River with both planned and unplanned releases, as well as ongoing leaks of radioactivity.
- Indian Point is located one mile from the intersection of the Ramapo Fault line and the Stamford to Peekskill Fault line, which could produce a 7.0 magnitude earthquake
- Nearing the end of its 40-year lifespan.
- Located 24 miles, as the crow flies, north of New York City.
- In 2004, the Union of Concerned Scientists, using Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) methodologies, calculated economic damages within 100 miles of Indian Point to exceed \$1.1 trillion for the worst cases evaluated. The Price-Anderson Act limits the nuclear industry's liability at \$12.6 billion per accident (2011). Taxpayers would be responsible for the rest.
- Reactor #2 was long ranked among the most unsafe reactors in the US.
- Indian Point had a long history of accidents and safety violations -- a steam boiler tube rupture, transformer explosions, siren failures, and planned and unplanned releases as well as ongoing leaks of radioactivity

## Where will energy be sourced from after Indian Point Closes?

- The New York Independent System Operator (NYISO), responsible for coordinating electricity supply distribution, has confirmed that there is already enough energy on the grid to close down Indian Point without compromising reliability<sup>1</sup>
- Indian Point can be closed without additional natural gas or carbon-based fuel
- NYISO reports that NYS has declined in annual electricity demand over the last decade and electricity usage will remain essentially flat over the next decade<sup>2</sup>
- Clean resources now in operation or under development will contribute some 20,000 GWh annually by 2024, exceeding Indian Point's annual generation of 16,334 GWh.

## What would a safer decommissioning process look like?

- Safest possible onsite storage with a company that has a much more reassuring track record
- Better canister/cask storage systems
- Minimal transportation
- No "consolidated interim storage"(CIS) in First Nation and Latinx communities

## Timeline:

- 1. Inform at-risk communities** (April - May 2021)
  - Spread the word about the risks that we are facing
  - Raise questions and concerns
- 2. Virtual presentation with impacted communities** (May 2021)
  - Clearwater will host a virtual presentation with individuals and organizations looking to advocate for a safe decommissioning process and to explore other Environmental and Climate Justice issues and potential solutions.
- 3. Work with each community in pairs** (as listed above) (June - August 2021)
  - Decommissioning poses unique challenges to each community
- 4. Fall 2021 Action Summit** (late September 2021)
  - Community groups will reconvene to share lessons learned and actions going forward

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.nyiso.com/documents/20142/1396324/Indian\\_Point\\_Generator\\_Deactivation\\_Assessment\\_2017-12-13.pdf/f673a0f8-5620-1d7b-4be2-99aaf781ac5c](https://www.nyiso.com/documents/20142/1396324/Indian_Point_Generator_Deactivation_Assessment_2017-12-13.pdf/f673a0f8-5620-1d7b-4be2-99aaf781ac5c)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nyiso.com/documents/20142/2226333/2020-Gold-Book-Final-Public.pdf/>