

Monday, March 10, 2003

Testimony before The United States Congress
House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats,
And International Relations

My name is Richard P. Bond; I have been the First Selectman of New Canaan, Connecticut since November 1996. New Canaan is a town of approximately 20,000 people, 22 square miles in size, 1 hour from New York City, 1 hour from Hartford and 3 hours from Boston.

New Canaan is approximately 25 miles from Entergy's Indian Point nuclear power facility.

At the Board of Selectman's meeting on February 18, 2003 the following resolution was approved and forwarded to the Town Council for their adoption at their meeting on March 12, 2003:

“RESOLVE that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) conduct a full review of the deficiencies identified in the independent review of the Indian Point Energy Center's emergency preparedness plan. Such independent review was conducted by James Witt Associates at the request of New York Governor George Pataki to improve understanding of the neighboring area's ability to respond to a radiological event, and to assist efforts to strengthen emergency preparedness:

FURTHER RESOLVE that careful note be taken of the report by James Witt Associates which found, among other problems, that emergency planning at the Indian Point facility fails to take into account the possibility of a terrorist attack and insufficiently plans for the safe evacuation of local residents to protect them from radiation poisoning, specifically: (1) order an immediate closure of Indian Point's Unit Two and Unit Three reactors, (2) mandate immediate deployment of security measures sufficient to repel a terrorist attack on the reactors, spent fuel pools, control room or electrical equipment; and (3) separate and apart from above, order the immediate transfer of the plant's irradiated spent fuel rods (older than five years) from wet pool storage to a harden on- site storage system;

FURTHER RESOLVE that, in light of the significant problems identified by the Witt report, operations at the Indian Point facility be temporarily shut down until the issues raised by the report are fully resolved”

Set forth below are some of the steps taken by New Canaan so that we can maximize survival of people, prevent and or minimize injuries, preserve property and resources in the Town of New Canaan, Connecticut, and provide for the direction, control and continuity of the private sector and town government:

- Formalized an Emergency Management Structure as set forth in Attachment A;

- Established an Emergency Operation Center located in Town Hall with fire, police, ambulance and police “hot line” transmitters as well as radio equipment to operate on assigned civil preparedness frequencies;
- The fire station is equipped with a 50 kw generator and 5 additional electric generators, some of which are mounted on fire apparatus. The Fire Department is manned on a twenty-four hour basis. All of the active members have tone actuated monitor receivers. Members of the department are emergency medical technicians;
- All Police Department patrol vehicles are equipped with 2-way radios that are capable of communication with local fire and EMS services. The radios are also programmed to utilize a criminal justice band that allows communications with other police departments in Fairfield County. Additionally, our base station can patch information from the Sate “Hotline” frequency to all patrol units. The Hotline is a multi-jurisdictional frequency used by the by the Connecticut State Police and all police departments in the Fairfield County area.
- The 55 member New Canaan Volunteer Ambulance Corps, of which 50 members are emergency medical technicians, is equipped with two (2) two-way radio equipped ambulances and a paramedics response vehicle. Ambulances also have C-Med and Hear radios for direct communications with area hospitals. The ambulance service also has 30 walkie-talkies and a cell phone in each vehicle.

In addition to the above, the following services are available to the Town of New Canaan on a need and/or availability basis.

- There are no general hospitals in the community, however, there are three general hospitals located within 10 miles with a combined bed capacity of 1,000.
- The National Guard facility on the Town line has a transport battalion with radio, radar and communication equipment, trucks, water trucks, and recovery vehicles that can be used for disaster relief
- There are numerous shelter areas throughout town that are acceptable for natural disaster and other types of manmade emergencies that do not require shielding from nuclear radiation.
- Cell phone service is provided and is being expanded to cover the dead spots within the Town.

In the event of a natural, biological/chemical or nuclear disaster, the Town of New Canaan Emergency Preparedness Plan will be executed as outlined below:

COORDINATION OF THE NEW CANAAN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will call together such Town department heads and other Town officials and external agency representatives as deemed necessary by the

nature of the emergency and will brief them on the situation. The CEO will activate the Emergency Management Structure (see Attachment A)

- Following the briefing, all department heads and other persons involved will review their responsibilities outlined in the Emergency Operations Plan. They will then make preparations for the mobilization of their personnel as appropriate and necessary
- The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be activated and maintained on a stand-by basis pending further orders. Department heads will designate their representatives to the EOC.
- All emergency equipment, supplies and resources will be inventoried, checked and readied for emergency operations (response vehicles will be filled with gas and oil, emergency generators will be started and tested; radiological monitoring and hazardous material equipment, radios, flashlights, batteries, regulatory and safety signs, record forms, etcetera will be inventoried and checked for operational readiness).
- Personnel, equipment, and resources will be readied for dispersal and where necessary, moved to appropriate locations on a stand-by basis according to the particular type of emergency.
- The Emergency Management Director, in conjunction with the other Town security services, will coordinate the inspection of all communications and auxiliary generating equipment to ensure its operating capability.
- News releases will be prepared for newspapers, radio, local and town- specific television channels, and the Town Web site to be used only when directed by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Preparations will be made to alert, if necessary, the entire population of the Town, including organizations, agencies and/or groups serving the handicapped, elderly and non-English speaking residents.
- School officials, public and private, present at the briefing by the Chief Executive Officer will take all necessary steps to safeguard the school population at any time that school is in session. Institution and agencies not represented at the briefing will be alerted by the Emergency Management Director, if deemed necessary by the Chief Executive Officer.
- In an emergency of a local nature, the State Office of Emergency Management and communities with which mutual aid agreements exist will be alerted.
- During this phase, the overall readiness of the Emergency Operations Center for operation on a 24 basis will be initiated.

Once the immediate danger to Town residents has stabilized a recovery operation will begin:

- Continue rescue operations. If a radioactive environment exists, ensure monitoring and decontamination when possible. Monitoring and decontamination should precede all other recovery operations.
- Provide medical assistance to the sick and injured.

- Arrange for temporary shelter, housing, food and clothing where necessary.
- Make complete evaluation of the situation, including damage assessment and plan for restoration. Determine restoration priorities.
- Certify buildings and/or areas as being safe for habitation.
- Commence restoration of the Town following established priorities.
- Assist public utilities with the restoration of service where necessary and when requested.
- Provide emergency mortuary service.
- Maintain the Emergency Operations Center in operation until such time as the emergency and recovery operations no longer requires it.
- Provide for protection from looting and vandalism.
- Establish and maintain a disaster inquiry center.
- Maintain facilities for the dissemination of information to the public.
- Arrange for financial assistance where necessary to help residents and Town government to recover from the disaster. This will be done in cooperation with State and Federal agencies.
- Destroy contaminated food, drugs and other material.

Of particular concern to the residents and officials of New Canaan is the subject of evacuation. We continue to view as the most critical challenge to our emergency plan and planner, a scenario involving an incident which prompts large numbers of evacuees into and out of the New Canaan area. We are aware that this concern is shared with both our neighboring communities and with Connecticut's Emergency Management Office. As a result of the complexities of this issue, combined with inadequate direction from the State and Federal authorities, we have not been able to develop a practical and viable plan of evacuation.

The issues which inhibit a plan's development are many. Location in the most densely populated corridor of the country, proportionate lack of limited roadways, rail and waterway infrastructure, situated in the path of major urban escape routes and egress direction limited by the physical obstacles of Long Island Sound and New York City are a few of the most obvious.

Further, we need to factor into our planning those assets which will be committed from state and federal government sources. As of yet, we have not been made aware of the level of guidance and support we may expect to receive.

We are perfectly capable of evacuation execution within the borders of New Canaan or larger scale movements of town residents to nearby areas in response to local incidents. However, evacuation in response to regional or even broader emergencies must be developed within the scope of regional, state or federal plans,

