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No need to expand Indian Point emergency planning zone, NRC says



(EPZ)

around Indian Point to 50 miles, the federal agency Tuesday announced it sees "no basis at this point" for expanding it. The NRC's statement applies to all US nuclear power plants.

The current EPZ size has been in use since the 1970s following a federal task force study, said NRC spokesman Neil Sheehan.

"We're not saying that there couldn't be protective actions beyond that 10 mile radius, but certainly that's where the bulk of the effort should be focused; efforts such as determinations on evacuations, sheltering in place, administration of potassium iodide, the regular testing of sirens," he said. "All of that makes the greatest sense within that 10 mile radius."

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Daiichi plant in Japan was based on calculations done by NRC experts indicating releases from the three hobbled reactors and two fuel pools could possibly exceed conservatively set safe radiation-exposure limits for the public, Sheehan said.

Westchester Legislator Michael Kaplowitz, who is leading the local charge for the expanded area, said if the NRC won't do it for all nuclear power plants in the country, an exemption should be made just for Indian Point.

"The exemption would have to come from the legislative side – the Congress, the Senate, signed by the President, directing the NRC to set up a 50 mile zone and begin implementing a 50 mile zone around the New York-Indian Point power plants," he said.

But, Indian Point spokesman Jerry Nappi had his own take on Kaplowitz's effort.

"I really think it's a ploy by someone who is really a long time anti-nuclear activist to unfortunately try to exploit what is going on in Japan to further his own agenda to shut down an important piece of New York's infrastructure," he said.

Committees of the Westchester Board have been holding briefings since the Japanese nuclear crisis to ascertain if a similar situation could happen at Indian Point.

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