



Governor wants New York nuclear plant closed

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ALISON BOWEN

As the nuclear nightmare in Japan continues, Gov. Andrew Cuomo wants to shut down a Westchester power plant, but leading seismologists say there is no cause for alarm.

Cuomo wants to shutter Indian Point, the nuclear power plant 45 miles north of Times Square — and reportedly the most at risk in the nation for earthquakes, according to a new federal study.

The plant was built along Ramapo Fault, which isn't subject to extreme earthquakes — but, as Metro reported last month, New York City is long overdue for a quake, according to Won-Young Kim, head of the seismographic network at Columbia University's Earth Observatory.



Indian Point on the Hudson River supplies 30 percent of New York City's power supply.

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"I wouldn't be panicked for Indian Point," said Kim, who lives 15 minutes away from the plant. He noted it survived a 4.1 earthquake in 1985.

Instead of an earthquake, what New York scientists say they're really concerned about is radiation spreading worldwide from Japan.

"It could cover the globe," said Hofstra geology professor Charles Merguerian. "If it belches forth radioactive goo, people are going to experience it." Indian Point is now under a federal safety review.

Risk: Too close for comfort?

The U.S. government recommended a 50-mile evacuation zone in Japan — which, from Indian Point, would encompass the NYC metro area.

"Even if the risk is low, the consequence is enormous and potentially catastrophic," said Phillip Musegaas from environmental group Rivergreen. "Do we want to continue to take that risk?"

But can he do it?

Gov. Cuomo doesn't have any direct power, NRC spokeswoman Diane Screnci told Metro. In order to close the plant, she said, "We would have to determine that the plant was not or could not be operated safely." However, Entergy Corp. does need to renew its operating license for the reactors in 2013, and opposition from the state's top official could be influential.

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