



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

Harckham and Galef Win Support for Jobs and Local Revenue at Indian Point

PETE HARCKHAM June 10, 2020

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Albany, NY – New York State Senator Pete Harckham and Assemblywoman Sandy Galef won strong support today for workforce protections and local municipalities and taxpayers while the Indian Point Energy Center undergoes its decommissioning process, as three important bills passed in the Senate were approved today in the Assembly.

The legislation was sponsored by Harckham in the Senate, and by Galef in the Assembly.

“With less than a year until the third and last reactor goes offline at Indian Point, it is necessary to ensure that proper safeguards and guidelines are in place to protect the existing workforce and their families and guaranteeing revenue for local municipalities and schools,” said Harckham. “Sandy Galef, my legislative partner in this regard, and my Senate colleagues all understand the urgency involved in these issues, and I thank them for helping to move the legislation forward.”

“I am pleased to join Senator Harckham in announcing that these three bills have passed the New York State legislature and are now headed for the Governor’s desk,” said Galef. “These bills help to retain as much of the current workforce as possible while ensuring they are compensated appropriately, allow for a steady stream of revenue to the taxing jurisdictions through a PILOT, and compensate our communities for the storage of spent nuclear fuel. As Indian Point moves from active energy generation toward decommissioning each bill eases the transition, protecting workers, tax payers, and communities. I could not be more pleased to have these bills awaiting the Governor's signature.”

The first bill, S.7846, addresses the possible negative impact to the workforce during the decommissioning by keeping workers at Indian Point at the prevailing wages commensurate with the wages being paid for the same work in this area. This stays in effect whether the plant’s present corporate owner, Entergy, or a new owner chosen to enact the decommissioning is in control of operations.

Also, the bill focuses on the obvious necessity of professional maintenance of the Indian Point facility during its decommissioning by requiring that new hires are selected from a list of qualified employees at the plant.

“We thank our state legislators for standing with the workers of Indian Point and creating legislation designed to protect jobs,” said Thomas Carey, President of the

Westchester/Putnam Central Labor Body, AFL-CIO. “My family and I have had the opportunity for nearly 50 years to have worked at the plant, so I know personally the importance of these jobs to the community, and the region, and the significance of saving them.”

The financial implications to the local community from Indian Point’s closing are expected to be sizable. The municipal tax base and local school district funding have long been supported by the energy facility, and maintaining a good portion of that support is crucial, especially in light of unforeseen municipal costs incurred during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

To steady tax revenues for the Town of Cortlandt, Village of Buchanan and Hendrick Hudson School District during the transition, legislation (S. 8075) was passed to include spent fuel and the fuel casks at the nuclear facility as part of its real property tax assessment. Otherwise, market value of the non-operating plant will adversely affect the assessment and create an unmanageable revenue gap for these tax-funded entities.

Harckham noted that this is also arguably an environmental bill in that it incentivizes getting nuclear waste off of the site.

The third bill, S.8204, deals with Indian Point’s PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreement, which is set to expire in April 2021. The bill simply allows “formerly generating” energy plants to make these payments as well.

“Senator Harckham and Assemblywoman Galef worked hard with our community to draft these important bills that are designed to help generate badly needed tax revenue for our village, as well to protect jobs,” Buchanan Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker said. “At a time of crisis when our village faces a staggering loss of tax dollars and jobs, our legislators listened

to us and delivered for our community.”

Finally, Harckham and Galef have introduced legislation, still yet to be voted on, to create a statewide board to oversee the decommissioning of Indian Point. This legislation would bring New York State to the table to oversee and monitor the decommissioning of any nuclear plant in the state.

Decommissioning is a multifaceted process of deactivating and removing a nuclear power plant: it requires years, if not decades, of meticulous work. With so much at stake during decommissioning, “it’s important for the state to have a vested interest in ensuring that it is done safely, efficiently and completely,” said Harckham.