**Lawmakers Call For Probe After Indian Point Groundwater Contamination**

CBS New York

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**BUCHANAN, N.Y. (CBSNewYork) —** Sen. Charles Schumer and other lawmakers are calling for a thorough investigation of a recent leak of radioactive material, which was found in the groundwater at Indian Point Energy Center.

The [water](http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2016/02/08/indian-point-water-contamination-probe/) is said to be contaminated with Tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen.

“It’s basically heavy water. The real problem with tritium is that you can never separate it,” Environmental Attorney Susan Shapiro said. “You can’t clean the water once it becomes radioactive.”

A spokesperson from Entergy, the company who operates Indian Point, told CBS2 the company believes the radioactive water spilled during a routine shutdown for refueling *(to supply again with fuel)*. The spokesperson said they currently did not know how the substance leaked out of the building.

As radioactive contaminants go, Tritium is fairly benign *(harmless)*. To be harmful to humans it has to be ingested *(to take, as food or drink, into the body)*, which is why its presence in ground water is of concern, CBS2’s Lou Young reported.

1) If Tritium is a benign substance, why is there concern that it is in ground water?

Two years ago, radiation measured at 616,000 picouries, or PCI — the unit of measurement used to determine radiation levels, Young reported. Last year, Entergy recorded 900,000 PCI of radiation — then a jump to 8 million PCI radiation from nuclear fission determined for 2016.

The recent jump is what prompted Gov. Andrew Cuomo to issue an investigation into the contamination, Young reported.

Cuomo released a statement on the incident on Saturday, noting that the upstate [New York](http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2016/02/08/indian-point-water-contamination-probe/) energy company “reported alarming levels of radioactivity at three monitoring wells, with one well’s radioactivity increasing nearly 65,000 percent.”

2)

Schumer *(a New York senator)* also made it clear that he [did not want to close the facility down](http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2016/01/16/indian-point-fights-shutdown/) without an alternative, WCBS 880’s Rich Lamb reported, noting that if the plant was to close, it would cause substantial economic issues for the city.

”People have come to me and said let’s shut it down. I said if Indian Point provides about 25 percent on New York City’s electricity, show me an alternative plan and i’d be open to shutting it down, Schumer said.

Weschester County Executive Rob Astorino said Entergy reported the tritium levels found in the surrounding groundwater are 1,000 times below the federal limit and do not pose a health risk, WCBS 880’s Stephanie Colombini reported.

“What we do not want is false hysteria that’s going to create havoc and have people not drink water,” Astorino said.

Astorino said he want inspectors with the NRC to verify all tests were done correctly, but he also wants politicians who are saying the incident is a sign that Indain Point is putting the public in danger to “stop overreacting.”

“This is, to our knowledge, not a serious situation and it shouldn’t be used for the wrong reasons,” Astorino said.

Entergy is currently seeking a 20-year license renewal from the federal government — a move that the Cuomo administration opposes.

3) Why doesn’t Senator Schumer want to shut Indian Point nuclear energy plant down?

4) Do you agree with Cuomo’s decision to not renew the license for Indian Point nuclear energy plant? Why or why not?