

Indian Point - New York's nuclear plant

Read the text.

New York is often called "the city that never sleeps". Even at midnight, Manhattan is brightly lit, and Times Square is full of dazzling neon signs. In the daytime, thousands use the subway to get to work. They spend the day in office blocks kept comfortably cool in the hot summer by air conditioning and warmed by efficient heating systems in the bitterly cold New York winter.

All that activity uses a lot of electricity, and 25% of it comes from the Indian Point nuclear power plant, which lies on the Hudson River just 60km north of New York city. The power plant has been in operation since 1962 - and that's long enough says the Governor of New York state, Andrew Cuomo. He calls Indian Point a "catastrophe waiting to happen" and wants to shut it down.

The nuclear plant sits on the Ramapo fault line and near another one which was recently discovered. These fault lines could cause serious earthquakes of up to 7.0 on the Richter scale say some experts, but the reactors at Indian Point can only survive an earthquake of 6.1 undamaged. However, the plant's operators say that no earthquake in the region would ever be bigger than that. They also point out that there is no danger of a tsunami, which did so much damage in Fukushima Japan.

There have already been a number of smaller incidents at Indian Point. It was shut down in 1973 when engineers discovered a fault in the steel lining of the concrete dome. The plant had to close again for 11 months in 2000, after a small radioactive leak.

The Indian Point plant is in one of the most densely populated parts of the USA. After Fukushima, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the US nuclear authority, told Japanese to evacuate from an area 80km around the damaged reactors. But at home, the evacuation radius for Indian Point is only 16km.

If the authority extended the radius to 80km, the whole of the New York region would have to be evacuated - that would mean getting 17 million people away from the danger zone. An almost impossible task. So opponents of the plant say the only solution is to play safe and shut Indian Point down.

However, New York city Mayor Michael Bloomberg argues that New York can't do without the electricity from Indian Point. He would prefer to use wind and solar power, but says the city needs nuclear power until these alternatives are ready.

President Obama would agree with that. His administration wants to create a cleaner US energy supply with fewer emissions of carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas produced by burning fossil fuels like coal and oil. That means using renewable energy from wind and solar plants and using biofuels and electricity to run cars. It also means using nuclear energy. In a speech he made at the end of March 2011, a time when Americans were shocked by the pictures of Fukushima, Obama said: "Right now, America gets about one fifth of our electricity from nuclear energy. And it's important to recognise that nuclear power, if it's safe, can make a contribution to the climate change."

Until Fukushima, most Americans agreed that nuclear power was a solution to the country's energy problems, but the accident has made people more sceptical. Only 43 per cent in a recent poll said they supported the building of new nuclear plants, compared with 57 per cent in 2008. And 60 per cent said they would not want a nuclear plant in their community. If opposition to nuclear power grows, New York may have to find other ways of keeping the lights on in Times Square.

(Quelle: Read On, August 2011)

1. What do the New Yorkers need energy for? Answer each question in one or two words.

Name three. An example is given (a).

3BE

- a) subway
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____

2. Complete the sentences with one to six words/ numbers.

5BE

- a) Indian Point nuclear power plant delivers _____ of New York's energy.
- b) Indian Point was opened _____ and is situated on the Hudson River.
- c) The position of Indian Point is problematic because there are two _____ beneath it.
- d) Indian Point would never withstand an earthquake of _____ undamaged.
- e) Indian Point had to be _____ because of two minor incidents

3. Find out whether the statements below are true, false or not given. Tick the correct box.

There's only one correct solution.

4BE

		True	false	not given
a)	Indian Point is situated in a very crowded region.			
b)	In case of an emergency, Indian Point would be evacuated within an area of 80 km.			
c)	Evacuating 17 million is not very problematic.			
d)	A lot of opponents went on the street for closing down Indian Point.			

4. Answer the following questions in one to seven words/ numbers.

3BE

a) What kinds of energy are favored by the mayor New York City?

b) How much energy used in the USA comes from nuclear power?

c) What reason does Obama give for the USA's continued use of nuclear energy?

5. Which statement summarizes the text best? Tick the correct box. There's only one correct solution.

1BE

<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian Point - dangerous for New York
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian Point - America's future
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian Point - old but still needed

Lösung

1. three out of four: neon signs, lights, heating, air conditioning
2.
 - a) 25% / one quarter
 - b) in 1962
 - c) fault lines
 - d) 7.0 or over/ higher than 6.1
 - e) shut/ closed
3.
 - a - *true*
 - b - *false*
 - c - *false*
 - d - *not given*
4.
 - a - wind and solar
 - b - one fifth or 1/5
 - c - doesn't emit carbon dioxide/make a contribution to the climate change
5. Indian Point - old but still needed