



UNITED STATES  
**NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

March 21, 2005\*

Letter to the Editor, Suffolk Life (Amityville Edition)

There are numerous inaccuracies in your editorial of February 16, "The Big Lie Continues," that I would like to correct and set the record straight. First, the "hearing concerning the extension of the 10-mile" emergency planning zone around the Millstone nuclear plant" was a meeting that was held on January 11 in Waterford, Conn., on an environmental impact statement prepared as part of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's review of a request to extend the license of the Millstone nuclear power plants in Connecticut. You also misstated that I was there, while in fact, I spoke with your reporter over the telephone from my office in King of Prussia, Pa.

With regard to the accident at the Three Mile Island Unit 2 on March 28, 1979, it was the most serious in U.S. commercial nuclear power plant operating history; however, it led to no deaths or injuries to plant workers or members of the nearby community. There was no explosion, so we cannot confirm your assertions that a door was badly damaged by an explosion during the accident. It is also false to suggest that the plant was four seconds from a complete meltdown or that a janitor played any prevention role.

Your recounting of the limited evacuation that was ordered at TMI is greatly exaggerated. The Governor recommended an evacuation of pregnant women and pre-school age children living within five miles of the plant when he believed conditions warranted. Approximately 144,000 people within a fifteen-mile radius of the plant evacuated at some point during the crisis, more than half of them on one day. This is less than one quarter of the number of evacuees that you reported. In addition, we cannot find any reports of a two-day traffic gridlock, nor do we know of a six-lane highway within 50 miles of TMI in 1979 or today.

Regarding fatalities from Chernobyl, 31 people died soon after the accident, according to the latest report from the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. You incorrectly reported "hundreds of people were killed."

The job of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is to ensure the safe use of nuclear materials, including nuclear power. We believe that the public also deserves to know the facts.

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\*Corrected 6/27/05 to indicate the Governor recommended (not ordered) an evacuation around TMI.