

EDO Principal Correspondence Control

FROM: DUE: 07/03/01 EDO CONTROL: G20010255
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FINAL REPLY:

Harold F. Mowery, Jr.
Senate of Pennsylvania

TO:

Chairman Meserve

FOR SIGNATURE OF : ** PRI ** CRC NO: 01-0312

Chairman

DESC:

ROUTING:

Request for Hearing Regarding Exelon's Request to
Move the Emergency Operations Facility

Travers
Paperiello
Kane
Norry
Reiter
Craig
Burns
Miller, RI
Wessman, IRO
Cyr, OGC

DATE: 06/22/01

ASSIGNED TO: CONTACT:
NRR Collins

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS OR REMARKS:

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
CORRESPONDENCE CONTROL TICKET

Date Printed: Jun 21, 2001 16:15

PAPER NUMBER: LTR-01-0312 **LOGGING DATE:** 06/21/2001
ACTION OFFICE: EDO

AUTHOR: HAROLD MOWERY
AFFILIATION: PA-GOV
ADDRESSEE: RICHARD MESERVE
SUBJECT: URGES THE COMMISSION TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON EXELON ENERGY'S
REQUEST TO MOVE TMI CRISIS UNIT.....

ACTION: Signature of Chairman
DISTRIBUTION: RF, SECY TO ACK

LETTER DATE: 06/13/2001
ACKNOWLEDGED: No
SPECIAL HANDLING:

NOTES: COMMISSION CORRESPONDENCE
FILE LOCATION: ADAMS

DATE DUE: 07/06/2001 **DATE SIGNED:**

EDO --G20010255

6694

31ST DISTRICT
HAROLD F. MOWERY, JR.

SENATE BOX 203031
MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3031
(717) 787-8524
FAX (717) 772-0576
EMAIL:hmowery@pasen.gov

DISTRICT OFFICE:
1023 MUMMA ROAD
LEMOYNE, PA 17043
717-763-7623
1-800-734-5287

DISTRICT OFFICE:
POST OFFICE BOX 329
NEW BLOOMFIELD, PA 17068
717-582-4600

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Senate of Pennsylvania

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PENNSYLVANIA INFRASTRUCTURE
INVESTMENT AUTHORITY

June 13, 2001

Dr. Richard A. Meserve, Chairman
US Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint North
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852-2738

Dear Dr. Meserve:

Last week, as I opened my morning paper, I was startled to see the headline, "*Firm Asks to Move Crisis Unit for TMI*". I continued to read in great disbelief the complete article in the June 7, 2001 edition in the Harrisburg *Patriot News* (copy enclosed).

Dr. Meserve, as an elected official representing nearly 250,000 citizens in Central Pennsylvania, many of whom reside within 25 miles of TMI, I must strenuously object to the proposed move of the emergency operations facility that covers Three Mile Island. I, along with many area officials and residents, implore the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to reject this proposal from Exelon Energy.

There is nothing from a policy standpoint to justify shifting the crisis unit or doubling the response time in event of an emergency. Nothing has changed to erase the concerns that area residents have about nuclear power plants generally and about Three Mile Island specifically. Because of the incident at Three Mile Island, I doubt whether there will ever be a time when people treat it the same as any other nuclear plant. Most people are reconciled to its continuing operation; they are not as accepting of a significant step that they regard as sacrificing safety.

The article states that company officials are contending that distance makes no difference in emergency response time. This is an argument that does not strike people as sensible. I believe most people would side with Marko Bourne, spokesman for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, who is quoted as saying "One advantage of the current system is that it's a lot easier to walk across the hall than to communicate 70 or 80 miles."

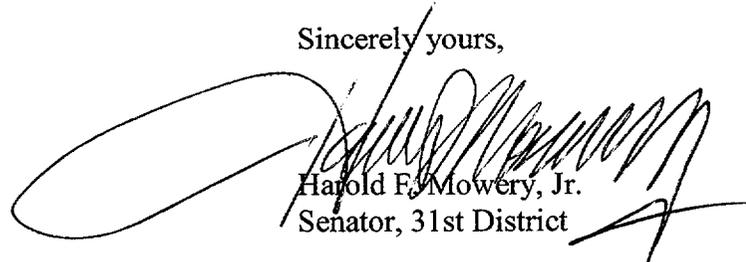
Page Two – Letter to Dr. Richard A. Meserve
June 13, 2001

The suspicion is that the real reason for the consolidation is financial. Most believe that consolidations undertaken as economy measures rarely result in equivalent services being provided. If we allow a company to cut corners on nuclear safety just to save a few dollars, then we have really run away from our responsibility to the people living in the vicinity of the facility.

I respectfully request that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission hold a public hearing on Exelon's proposed request. A public hearing would provide an appropriate forum for public officials and area residents to voice their opinions on this proposal. If such a hearing were not to be held, I would urge the Commission to act consistent with the public view in the areas surrounding TMI and reject the request from Exelon.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Thanking you in advance for consideration of my request, I remain,

Sincerely yours,



Harold F. Mowery, Jr.
Senator, 31st District

Enclosure

cc: Editorial Board - Harrisburg Patriot News

HFM, Jr.: adb

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Firm asks to move crisis unit for TMI

Critics say plant's operator favors savings over safety

PATRICK 6/7/01

BY BRETT LIEBERMAN
OF OUR WASHINGTON BUREAU

A1

WASHINGTON — The emergency operations facility for Three Mile Island would move roughly 50 miles from the plant, to a site that serves the Peach Bottom and Limerick nuclear plants, if a plan by TMI's operator gains approval.

The plan also calls for reducing staff positions and extending from 30 to 60 minutes the response time required for personnel to be in place at the center if there's an emergency.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission would have to approve the consolidation and move to Coatesville.

State emergency planning officials, as well as watchdog groups, are critical of the proposal and say they believe the move is being driven by plant operator Exelon Nuclear Corp.'s attempt to cut costs.

Exelon, the nation's largest operator of nuclear plants, wants to cut the number of emergency planning positions at TMI in Londonderry Twp. from 21 to 10 and from 16 to 10 each at Peach Bottom, in southern York County, and Limerick, near Philadelphia.

Company officials, however, say the consolidation would be efficient, provide better training and standardize operations at the three plants. If approved by the NRC, the company hopes to add responsibility for the Oyster Creek plant in New Jersey to its combined facility in Coatesville.

"We're going to a standardized emergency plan for the company," said Exelon spokesman Ralph DeSantis.

Exelon presented its plan to the NRC during a meeting at the regional headquarters in King of Prussia and expects to submit a formal request by the end of the month. Concerns raised by the NRC and certain aspects of the proposal require approval by the full commission, but a public hearing is not likely.

The company plans to make the changes on Jan. 2.

Of particular concern to the NRC is the proposed change that would double the allowable response time in an

From Page A1
emergency.

"That's a significant change," said NRC spokesman Neil A. Sheehan. "Exelon makes the argument that since their corporate offices are located in Kennett Square, a lot of the personnel responding would be coming from there. It is a significant change and we need to take a look at the pros and cons."

Another aspect of Exelon's proposal that would require NRC approval is a plan to move TMI's technical support center from the plant control room to another building on the island. Exelon officials believe it would alleviate congestion in the control room.

The TMI emergency operations facility in Lower Paxton Twp. is about 12 miles from the plant. The building also houses the Joint Information Center that disseminates information to the media and the public during an emergency. Under Exelon's proposal, the information center would remain in Lower Paxton.

During an emergency, the emergency operations center would provide additional technical expertise to operators at the plant and communications with federal and state governments.

Because of its function, DeSantis said, "It really doesn't make much difference where it's at."

The Coatesville site, closer to Exelon's Mid-Atlantic Regional Operating Group headquarters in Kennett Square, has handled emergency operations for the Peach Bottom and Limerick plants since the early 1990s. State emergency officials, who have concerns about the current proposal, said the location has not hampered operations.

But watchdog groups question the motives and argue that economics rather than safety is driving the proposal.

"It demonstrates the worst aspect of deregulation," said Eric Epstein, president of TMI Alert. "In the event of an emergency, you would like to be able to plan the response from a location that has the same area code.

"Right now, we have a state-of-the-art planning facility outside the 10-mile zone. It's well-equipped to handle a dedicated emergency at TMI."

DeSantis said the plant operator plans additional staff training on TMI's reactor.

Emergency management officials also have expressed safety concerns about the proposed move and whether it would delay emergency response or the spread of information.

"We want to make sure there's enough monitoring personnel in place to quickly move in case something happens and they don't have to come from somewhere else," said Marko Bourne, spokesman for the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. "One advantage of the current system is that it's a lot easier to walk across the hall than to communicate 70 or 80 miles."

Brett Lieberman may be reached at (202) 383-7833 or blieberman@patriot-news.com.

TMI to close, swap transformer

BY BRETT LIEBERMAN
OF OUR WASHINGTON BUREAU

PATRICK 6/7/01

B6

WASHINGTON — Three Mile Island plans to go offline and disconnect from the electric power grid today to replace one of its two main transformers. The outage is expected to last a week, a plant spokesman said. A mobile refurbished spare onsite will be used until a more permanent replacement can be made, probably during a planned fall refueling outage.

Plant engineers intend to replace both of the main transformers at that time. TMI has been operating at between 58 and 60 percent of capacity since April as engineers monitored and tried to fix the transformer problem, according to spokesman David Carl. Plant workers had detected an increase in dissolved gases in the oil used to cool the transformer. Higher gas levels, though within allowable safety limits,

decrease the transformer's efficiency and prevent the plant from operating at 100 percent, he said. The transformers are used to increase the voltage of the electricity generated at TMI and send the power to the electric grid. The outage is not expected to have a major impact on regional power supplies. Brett Lieberman may be reached at (202) 383-7833 or blieberman@patriot-news.com.

Firm asks to move crisis unit for TMI

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Patriot, 6/7/01
BY BRETT LIEBERMAN
OF OUR WASHINGTON BUREAU

AI

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See TMI / Back Page

From Page A1

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