

July 30, 1979

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
Washington, D.C. 20555

Attention: Harold R. Denton, Director

Dear Mr. Denton:

Director of Reactor Safety, Roger Mattson, testifying before the Presidential Commission, stated that the Three Mile Island Nuclear (TMI) Plant was exempt from NRC's 1975 safety rules and regulations. The 1975 rules require that new plants increase from 1 to 3 the number of conditions under which the containment building which houses the reactor would automatically be sealed shut and air tight in the event of an accident.

He admitted under questioning that the decision not to require conformance to the 1975 safety rules and regulations for nuclear plants already operating or under construction was a question of practicality. Because of a nonconformance to the NRC safety rules the TMI containment failed to automatically seal shut for about 5 hours. This allowed release of large quantities of radioactive gases into the environment.

Professor Kinney, Chairman of the President's TMI Commission said he did not understand how any nuclear plant could be exempt from making modifications which would significantly improve on critically important safety matters - matters that effect the health and safety and general welfare of the public.

In view of the above, please provide the following information as soon as possible:

1. Has the NRC allowed an exemption from the 1975 safety rules for Monticello?
2. Has the NRC allowed an exemption from the 1975 safety rules for Prairie Island?
3. If the answers to 1 and 2 are no, when will Monticello and Prairie Island be brought in compliance with the NRC 1975 safety rules and regulations.
4. Will Monticello plant's containment building shut automatically and become air tight in the event of an accident to prevent radioactive releases?
5. Will containment at Prairie Island 1 and 2 containment building seal shut automatically and become air tight in the event of an accident to prevent radioactive releases?

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If the answers to 5 and 4 are yes, then under what conditions does this apply in the event of an accident to (a) Monticello, (b) Prairie Island.

6. What is time interval between an accident and the automatic closing of containment to seal shut and air tight condition?

(a) At Monticello

(b) At Prairie Island

Regardless of the answers to the above questions, it appears to me that our problems increase with an unstable technology - a technology that is unable to protect the public health and safety and has no solution to the radioactive waste problem. It is imperative that all safeguards be employed at nuclear plants, at least some future leukemia and cancer may be prevented.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Steve J. Gadler
Member, Minnesota
Pollution Control Agency Board

SJG/lk

cc: Arthur Engelbrecht, Chairman, MPCA
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