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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

May 15, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: D. F. Ross, Jr., Deputy Director, Division of Project Management, NRR

FROM: Donald J. Skovholt, Assistant Director for Quality Assurance and Operations, DPM

SUBJECT: COMMENTS REGARDING R. MCDERMOTT MEMO

I have reviewed the memorandum from R. McDermott dated May 14, 1979 regarding the safety assessment of B&W reactors.

As noted by Mr. McDermott, the work by him that led to his concerns was performed during the period that he was assigned to a bulletin-review task force. I noted that he performed his work with a high degree of diligence but, since this assignment is not related to responsibilities of my office, I have not performed the in-depth technical review that would be necessary to corroborate each point. However, I do offer the following comments regarding the concerns and conclusions in Mr. McDermott's report.

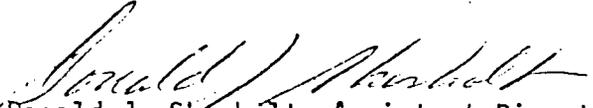
1. I believe that these concerns reflect valid questions that have resulted from consideration of the TMI-2 incident and appropriate staff investigation is warranted to resolve them.
2. I believe that these concerns are known to, and are being addressed by, the appropriate staff organizational units responsible for their investigation. I note that Mr. McDermott also believes that they are being reviewed although he indicates that he does not have current knowledge of the status of all the conclusions reached. Likewise, I do not continually have, or need to have, current knowledge of developments in all staff review areas; however, I have no reason to question the ability of the assigned staff to perform these functions.
3. With regard to Mr. McDermott's opinions concerning the need to keep all B&W reactors shutdown until a number of analyses and modifications are performed, I do not find a convincing basis to support this action as

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May 15, 1979

necessary for the protection of public health and safety. It seems to me that the expressed concerns are already part of the Commission's action program on a time scale deemed appropriate. Certainly, Mr. McDermott's concerns should be provided to the assigned review groups to take into account.

I have also reviewed the comments of Mr. Haass on the memorandum and am in agreement with them.


Donald J. Skovholt, Assistant Director
for Quality Assurance and Operations
Division of Project Management

cc: R. S. Boyd
W. P. Haass
R. J. McDermott