



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

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TERA

August 21, 1979

Docket Nos. 50-277
and 50-278

Ms. Steph Laughland
R.D. #2
Conestoga, Pennsylvania 17516

Dear Ms. Laughland:

Your letter to Chairman Hendrie has been referred to me for reply. I understand from your comments that you are concerned that the radiological effluents from the Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station exceed the Federal Standards and that the incident at Three Mile Island resulted in a significant radiation exposure to the population in the immediate area surrounding the facility. Each of your concerns is addressed below.

In the case of the effluent limits for Peach Bottom, I assure you that the limits are well below Federal Standards. The Federal Standards establish the maximum permissible concentrations of liquid and gaseous effluents that any licensee may release to an unrestricted area. These levels can be averaged over a year and are consistent with the levels recommended by the Federal Radiation Council. During our licensing reviews of nuclear power plants, we establish effluent limits for each site which are one to two percent of these Federal Standards. The Peach Bottom limits are no exception. We establish these lower limits in keeping with our policy of maintaining radiation exposures as low as is reasonably achievable.

Although these licensed levels are substantially below Federal Standards, we require licensees to report to us if they are exceeded. Further, even under these circumstances, we require the licensee to investigate the cause for exceeding these levels and to take corrective action to return release rates to within these low prescribed limits. Accordingly, this regulatory approach to maintain releases to as low as is reasonably achievable will result in reports to us whenever radiological effluent limits are exceeded even though releases are substantially less than Federal Standards.

In the case of the Peach Bottom license, not only are the release limits consistent with the above, but a special study was performed by the staff, and a public hearing was held, to determine if it would be cost-beneficial to add any radiological waste treatment equipment to further reduce the radioactive effluents from the facility. The results of our study indicate there are none. A copy of this study as well as transcripts of the hearing and the final decision of the Commission are available for your review at the Local Public Document Room in Harrisburg.

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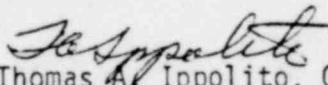
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In the case of the incident at Three Mile Island, the releases of radioactivity to the environment have not been significant in terms of the public health and safety. By this statement we do not mean to imply in any manner that the incident was not significant; however, the associated environmental impact resulting from the radioactive releases is minimal. Enclosed is a copy of NUREG-0558, "Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station," which may be of use in understanding the environmental impact associated with the accident. As stated in the report, the offsite collective doses represent minimal risks (that is, a very small number) of additional health effects to the offsite population.

Although the report addresses primarily the gaseous releases, the liquid releases of radioactivity to the Susquehanna River following the accident have been maintained within the Technical Specification limits of the facility. As previously discussed, these low level limits correspond to a small fraction of the Federal Standards. With the liquid releases being maintained within the Technical Specification limits; the resulting environmental doses have been negligible and not different from what is anticipated for normal operation of a nuclear facility.

The accident at Three Mile Island is still under NRC investigation. As the results of the investigation become available, they will be made publicly available at the NRC Local Public Document Room in Harrisburg.

Sincerely,


Thomas A. Ippolito, Chief
Operating Reactors Branch #3
Division of Operating Reactors

Enclosure:
Population Dose and Health
Impact of the Accident at
the Three Mile Island
Nuclear Station

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