

**ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION
AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**1111 HOWE AVENUE
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95825

April 19, 1979

Mr. Joseph M. Hendrie, Chairman
Mr. Victor Gilinsky, Commissioner
Mr. Richard T. Kennedy, Commissioner
Mr. Peter A. Bradford, Commissioner
Mr. John F. Ahearne, Commissioner
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Commissioners:

As you are aware, the State of California has had a substantial interest in the accident at the Three-Mile Island nuclear reactor in Pennsylvania, principally because of the similarities between that plant and the Babcock and Wilcox-designed Rancho Seco reactor near Sacramento, California. We are particularly interested in whether the events initiating and compounding the seriousness of the accident resulted from a unique chain of events, or whether they are related to generic design defects in Babcock and Wilcox reactors.

Furthermore, we wish to understand as completely as possible the wide-ranging ramifications of this accident, including, for example, employee and public exposure and possible long-term health consequences, property contamination, economic losses, emergency procedures, operator training and guidance procedures, the likelihood of any further operation of Three-Mile Island, decontamination procedures and expenses, and the allocation of the economic burden among Metropolitan Edison's shareholders and ratepayers, ratepayers of other utilities (under the Price Anderson Act's retrospective premium plan), and the general public. Because of the seriousness of the accident and the magnitude of public concern, we believe that these issues should be thoroughly investigated and then should be addressed at extensive public hearings.

In attempting to understand your procedures for investigating and making public the causes and consequences of serious reactor accidents, we carefully reviewed NRC's rules and regulations at 10 CFR 1-100. We found no established procedure to comprehensively and publicly address the issues we have raised. If you have recently established such procedures or guidelines for investigating the Three-Mile Island accident,

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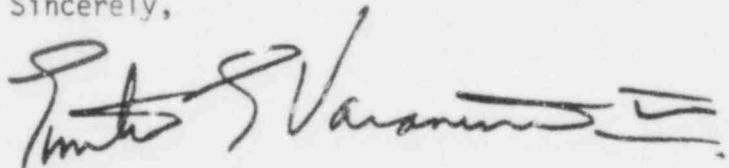
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please send us a copy of any documents relating to the procedures you intend to use.

Finally, we suggest that the investigation and public hearings should include the active participation of states in which Babcock and Wilcox reactors are located. As we understand, these include Pennsylvania, California, Ohio, South Carolina and Florida. These states have a great stake in the most complete investigation possible and will also provide a greater measure of independence, credibility and thoroughness to the process, particularly in light of the public's perception of NRC's responsibility and involvement in the on-going management of the accident. The state's role could vary from independent lay review of the investigation, to providing independent technical consultants who would participate in the investigation, to providing officials who could participate on the hearing body preparing a final comprehensive report, to formal participation in public hearings with opportunity for questioning those involved in the investigation. We would be pleased to meet further with your staff to discuss more specific proposals or possible protocols for participation. Our fundamental concern, of course, is that the fullest possible public accounting be made of the nature, consequences and future possibilities of an accident like Three-Mile Island, and that presently affected states be made an integral part of that process.

We look forward to discussing this matter further with your staff once you have forwarded to us your present plans for the investigation.

Sincerely,



EMILIO E. VARANINI, III
Commissioner and Presiding Member
Nuclear Fuel Cycle Committee