

NRC FOR  
50-326



UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555  
August 22, 1979

Mr. H. W. Lacey  
746 Welwyn Way  
Alexandria, Louisiana 71301

Dear Mr. Lacey:

This is in reply to your letter of August 13, 1979, to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission asking why Three Mile Island One has not been allowed to resume operation.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission in its Order of July 2, 1979, directing that Three Mile Island Unit No. 1 shall remain shut down until further order of the Commission itself after a public hearing, stated: "In view of the variety of issues raised by the accident at the Three Mile Island Unit No. 2 facility, the Commission presently lacks the requisite reasonable assurance that the same licensee's Three Mile Island Unit No. 1 facility, a nuclear power reactor of similar design, can be operated without endangering the health and safety of the public."

The Commission's Order and Notice of Hearing on August 9, 1979, stated:

"In addition to the items identified for the other B&W reactors, the unique circumstances at TMI require that additional safety concerns identified by the NRC staff be resolved prior to restart. These concerns result from (1) potential interaction between Unit 1 and the damaged Unit 2, (2) questions about the management capabilities and technical resources of Metropolitan Edison, including the impact of the Unit 2 accident on these, (3) the potential effect of operations necessary to decontaminate the Unit 2 facility on Unit 1, and (4) recognized deficiencies in emergency plans and station operating procedures."

The Commission has stated that its primary commitment is to a fair and thorough hearing and decision.

We are mindful of the economic hardships associated with the shutdown of a nuclear power unit, but we must give priority to our responsibilities to ensure the protection of the public health and safety.

Sincerely,

*[Handwritten signature]*

Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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