

TERA

JAN 10 1980

Mrs. Norman Mitchell
519 Penn Ayr Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Dear Mrs. Mitchell:

I am writing in response to your letter postmarked May 18, 1979, regarding effects the accident at Three Mile Island may have on locally grown fruits and vegetables. I regret that my answer to your letter has been delayed. The accident and its consequences have created a substantial increase in the agency's workload, which has prevented me from responding to you as promptly as I would have liked to.


The radioactive materials that were released were primarily radioactive gases. The radioactivity was almost entirely from xenon, which is a chemically inactive gas. As the gases leaked out, the winds diluted them. To determine if food grown in the area was contaminated, the Department of Energy measured the amounts of radioactivity present in the samples of soil, water, air, and vegetation.

Based on these samples and on other information, it was concluded that the principal isotopes in the escaped gases were xenon-133 and xenon-135. Although radioactive iodine was found in samples of some milk, the concentration was less than 1% of the concentration permitted by NRC regulations. Other food samples were tested by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and none of the 377 food samples tested contained reactor-produced radioactivity. As a result, the effect of the radioactivity released by the Three Mile Island accident on the food grown in the area and on soils is negligible, and gardens can be planted.

I am enclosing here a summary of a NRC report regarding the effects of radiation on the health of the population residing near Three Mile Island.

I appreciate your concerns and assure you that every effort is being made to ensure the continued protection of the health and safety of the public, not only at the Three Mile Island Station, but also at all nuclear power plants. On behalf of the entire NRC staff, I want to express my appreciation of your interest and confidence.

Sincerely,



1784 119

Harold P. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Encl: Summary of NUREG-0558

OFFICE	ANL/TMI	TMI task force	TMI task force	D/TMI-2	
SURNAME	P. Chee	W. Oliy	S. Miner	R. Vollmer	8001220 209
DATE	PCC 12-11-79	1/3/79	1/3/79	1/3/80	

Distribution

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 - DDiIanni
 - CNelson
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 - RIngram/LA
 - * TERA

*Place these three copies in one envelope and forward to DSB-016.

extremely busy, but I
would appreciate a
reply.

Thank you,

Mrs. Norman Mitchell
519 Penn Ays Rd
Camp Hill, Pa 17011

(30)

Dear Mr. Denton,

First, I want to thank
you for all of your long
haired during the Three
Mile Island accident.
Your daily appearances on
TV brought us all some-
one we could trust and
admire.

Since I do trust your
judgment so much, would
you please let me know
if its ok to plant a
garden, or eat the local
crop of fruits and vege-
tables? Several people
in our office are
worried about it.

I know you must be

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