



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

OCT 31 1979

Docket No. 50-320

Mr. Wayne L. Besselman  
7416 Crittenden Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19119

Dear Mr. Besselman:

On October 3, 1979 you wrote Dr. Joseph Hendrie to offer a suggestion which you felt might help ensure that nuclear power plant operators are able to establish quickly the presence of annunciator malfunctions. While my staff has not yet had an opportunity to fully evaluate your proposal, I wanted to express my appreciation for your taking the time to forward your suggestion to the Commission and to assure you that it will be given serious consideration. Further, because of your interest in control room design, I wanted to make you aware of a number of initiatives which are underway to improve the man-machine interface in the control room at nuclear power plants.

Shortly after the accident at Three Mile Island, an interdisciplinary team of NRC staff scientists and engineers was formed to identify and evaluate safety concerns which arose as a result of that accident. In July of this year, this group, The Lessons Learned Task Force, published a report recommending a number of short-term actions of a very specific nature which the Commission is now implementing. This report entitled, "TMI-2 Lessons Learned Task Force Status Report and Short Term Recommendations," NUREG-0578, is enclosed for your information.

The Task Force then considered the need for change in several fundamental aspects of safety policy for nuclear power plants. A significant portion of this latter stage of the Task Force's deliberation was devoted to the needs of operators from the standpoint of both training and the control room man-machine interface. A second Task Force report, which addresses this aspect of their study, "TMI-2 Lessons Learned Task Force Final Report," NUREG-0585, was published several weeks ago and is also enclosed.

As noted in Section 7.2 of Appendix A of that report, the Task Force recommended that all owners of nuclear power plants conduct a one-year review of the design of their control rooms with the objective of ensuring that the plant operators utilize, in as positive manner as possible, the instrumentation and controls available to them in the control rooms and to identify and correct design inadequacies. Guidelines and criteria to be used by the NRC staff in reviewing these utility assessments are now being developed.

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In completing this task we are being guided by previous studies of the type you enclosed with your letter. We also expect to interact with experienced plant operators, control room designers, and in particular we will solicit constructive suggestions of the type you have provided in formulating these guidelines. We hope to complete this task early next year and we will endeavor to keep you apprised of its progress.

Again let me express my appreciation for the interest you have shown. I believe that significant benefits can be gained through the feedback from an informed member of the public. Your willingness to take the time to provide us with your views and suggestions will help ensure that our actions are properly directed.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by  
H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:  
As stated

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