DOCKETED USNRC
MAY 13 1979
Office of the Secretary Docketing & Service Section

Docket

MAY 14 1979

Docket Nos. 50-352
and 50-353

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Mr. Ronald H. Reynier
Solicitor, Limerick Township
424 King Street
Pottstown, Pennsylvania 19464

Dear Mr. Reynier:

Since rulings and decisions relating to the Limerick Nuclear Generating Station could be subject to review by the Commission, it would not be appropriate for the Commission to comment at this time. Accordingly, your letter of April 13, 1979 regarding the effect of the accident at Unit 2 of Three Mile Island Nuclear Station on the Limerick Nuclear Generating Station has been referred to me for response. On behalf of the Board of Supervisors of the Limerick Township, you made the following specific requests:

(1) That the Board of Supervisors be specifically advised of "any new regulations as to safety requirements and any other amendments or changes which the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will require of Philadelphia Electric Company in relationship to the construction of the nuclear power plant now under construction in Limerick Township".

(2) That the Board of Supervisors "be specifically advised as to what particular position the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will be instituting in relationship to the continuation of the construction of this plant..."

(3) That "the Nuclear Regulatory Commission conduct specific investigations as to the safety in regard to the Limerick nuclear plant".

First, I will briefly describe the activities that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff currently has underway as a result of the accident at the Three Mile Island plant; then I will address the specific requests cited above.

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The NRC staff is currently conducting a thorough investigation of the accident at the Three Mile Island plant. This investigation includes

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study of potential design deficiencies in the plant, plant operator response to the accident including operator errors and/or misinterpretation of plant instrumentation, and all other aspects of the accident which might lead to information that would improve the safety of nuclear power plants. For obvious reasons, the major emphasis of the current staff effort is focused on nuclear power plants that are presently licensed to operate. However, the results of the staff's investigations will also be applied to plants that are currently under construction and plants for which construction permits have been applied for but not yet issued. It should be noted that the Limerick plant is a boiling water reactor (while the Three Mile Island plant is a pressurized water reactor) and some of the results of the staff's investigation may not be directly applicable to the Limerick plant. It is the intent of the Commission and the staff to assure that the plant design and method of operation affords a minimum of risk to the public health and safety.

In regard to the three specific requests contained in your letter:

(1) The Board of Supervisors of Limerick Township will be put on the distribution list for major reports published by the staff regarding the results of its investigation of the Three Mile Island accident. These reports may contain recommendations regarding safety requirements that are applicable to plants such as the Limerick plant. The Chairman of the Board of Supervisors is already on the distribution list for major Commission or staff actions on the Limerick plant such as Federal Register Notices, Safety Evaluation Reports and Environmental Statements. Further, a local public document room has been established at the Pottstown Public Library. A copy of all correspondence to or from the NRC on the Limerick plant is sent to that local public document room.

(2) There are no current plans to cease construction of nuclear power plants. The holders of all construction permits, including Philadelphia Electric Company, will be notified of any new requirements for the Limerick plant that the NRC develops, either as a result of the investigation of the Three Mile Island accident or any other NRC effort. As stated previously, a copy of all such correspondence concerning the Limerick plant will be sent to the local public document room.

(3) The Limerick plant will be formally reviewed by the NRC staff prior to issuance of an operating license. This operating license review, which is a normal part of the licensing process, will consider results of the investigation of the Three Mile Island plant accident and the applicability of this information to the Limerick plant. Further, the NRC will publish a Safety Evaluation Report on the Limerick plant

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that will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards. An Environmental Statement will also be published by the NRC staff. In addition, there will be an opportunity for public hearings on the plant. The operating license will not be issued until all of these actions have been completed.

In regard to the opportunity for public participation, a copy of the Federal Register Notice advising that the application for operating licenses for the two units of the Limerick plant will be sent to the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Limerick Township. In addition, similar notices will be published in various newspapers that serve your local area.

In closing, let me again emphasize that it is the intent of the Commission to thoroughly investigate all aspects of the accident at the Three Mile Island plant. The results of the investigations may lead to new safety requirements. Such requirements will be applied to the Limerick plant to the extent that they are applicable.

Sincerely,
Original Signed By
Roger S. Boyd

for Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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