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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 13, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE JOSEPH CALIFANO  
THE HONORABLE JAMES SCHLESINGER  
THE HONORABLE DOUGLAS COSTLE

FROM:

JACK WATSON *Jack*

SUBJECT:

Long-Term Environmental Radiation Monitoring at Three Mile Island

It is clear that several Federal agencies must continue to play a key role in assuring the citizens around the Three Mile Island site of their safety during the final stages of the plant's shutdown and initiation of cleanup. It is essential that the involved Federal agencies work closely together to provide the most credible environmental radiation monitoring data. Consequently, pursuant to the President's direction that I coordinate the assistance efforts of all Federal agencies for the Three Mile Island accident, I am hereby designating the Environmental Protection Agency as the lead agency for these monitoring efforts. In addition, I am asking each of the agencies named below to continue to meet the responsibilities indicated and to provide adequate resources for those tasks.

Environmental Protection Agency

As the lead agency, EPA should assume responsibility for coordinating the collection and documentation of the environmental radiation data obtained by all of the Federal agencies involved since the accident occurred on March 28, 1979. The EPA should continue to maintain an operations center staffed with radiation specialists in the vicinity of Three Mile Island to coordinate data collection and to inform the public, through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, of off-site radiation levels. The information and data collected by EPA should be made available to the other participating agencies on a regular

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basis. The EPA should also continue to operate, at an adequate level, its environmental monitoring network for air and water-borne radioactivity. Finally, the EPA should prepare a report of such environmental radioactivity for the recently established Presidential Commission to investigate the accident.

Health, Education, and Welfare

The Food and Drug Administration should continue to conduct radioanalyses of milk and food in the vicinity of Three Mile Island at appropriate intervals. These, and all previous analyses, should be promptly submitted to the operations center. Other environmental data collected by FDA, such as dosimeter readings, should also be included in the combined Federal report.

The Center for Disease Control and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health should keep the EPA operations center informed of their activities, either at the reactor site or off-site. Any environmental data gathered by CDC or NIOSH should be submitted to the operations center for inclusion in the report.

Department of Energy

The Department of Energy should continue to sample and conduct radioanalyses of soil and vegetation in the vicinity of Three Mile Island at appropriate intervals. These, and all previous analyses, should be promptly submitted to the operations center. Other environmental data collected by DoE, or its contractors, such as radiation intensity measurements from helicopter flights and dosimeter readings, should also be included in the combined Federal report. The Department should also continue to provide meteorological support at the operations center, as needed.

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The Environmental Protection Agency should make every effort to obtain all pertinent environmental radiation data from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the State of Pennsylvania, and the utility.

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I am very pleased with the reports I have received of the excellent cooperation among the Federal agencies assisting in the Harrisburg area. I am confident that this spirit of cooperation will continue, and that all of the participants will maintain their vigilance until the risks of radiation releases are reduced to a minimum.

If you have any questions on these assignments, please call me or Gene Eidenberg (456-6537).

cc: Chairman Joseph Hendrie,  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission

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