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

JAN 24 1980

Mr. & Mrs. John T. Chilarski
111 Covert Avenue
New Hyde Park, New York 11040

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Chilarski:

Your letter to former Chairman Rowden notifying the Commission of your presence in the vicinity of the Three Mile Island nuclear station at the time of the accident has been referred to me for response. I regret that this answer has been delayed. The accident and its consequences have created a substantial increase in the agency's workload, which has prevented us from responding to you as promptly as we would have liked.

The very small dose of radiation that people in the area received came from radioactive gases that escaped from the auxiliary building. The average dose of radioactivity the population within 50 miles of TMI received was approximately 4 millirems. The maximum exposure to any individual was less than 100 millirems, which is less than the yearly dose each person receives as a result of natural background radiation. Doses at these levels result in less than one health effect over the lifetime of all people in this area. Natural background radiation people in the Harrisburg area receive is approximately 125 millirems per year. To put these doses into perspective, it should be noted that a traveler flying round trip in a jet from New York to Los Angeles receives 5 millirems of cosmic rays.

Let me 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harold R. Denton".

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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