

TMI Inquiry Group



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

JAN 24 1980

Mr. W. Wilson Goode, Chairman
Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
P. O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Chairman Goode:

I am writing in response to your letter of August 9, 1979 to Commissioner Hendrie regarding your concerns about Three Mile Island. I regret that this answer to your letter has been delayed.

With regard to your concern about the accidental release of contaminated water to the Susquehanna River, we share this concern. The Commission, in its Statement of May 25, 1979, has prohibited the releases of contaminated water from Three Mile Island - Unit 2 except for discharge of waste water decontaminated by the existing EPICOR-I decontamination system and discharge of industrial waste water as consistent with the facility operating licenses. To ensure that inadvertent releases will not occur, the licensee is required to prepare and implement detailed procedures prior to proceeding with any operation which could affect the plant's operation or the control of radioactive waste material. We require that these procedures be reviewed and approved by the NRC staff prior to use to assure that any unapproved release of contaminated water will not occur.

You also expressed a concern that GPU and Metropolitan Edison Company do not have the qualifications to manage decontamination operations at Three Mile Island and recommended that such work be conducted entirely by the NRC and/or a qualified consultant. As you know, the NRC was created by Congress to regulate the commercial use of nuclear energy. Thus, the NRC is not physically managing decontamination operations at TMI-2. However, we intend to fully implement the regulatory process in determining the acceptability of those operations as conducted by the licensee. Presently, there are fifteen Commission representatives, all qualified professionals, at the TMI site. Their task is to review all proposed cleanup plans, including, as noted above, the review and approval of detailed operating procedures, and to maintain surveillance of those operations which have been authorized. We believe that this provides adequate assurance that no future actions can be taken at the site without the NRC's review and approval.

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I would also call your attention to the Commission's Statement of Policy and Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Statement dated November 21, 1979 directing the NRC staff to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement on the decontamination and disposal of radioactive wastes resulting from the March 28, 1979 accident at Three Mile Island Unit 2; a copy of this Statement is enclosed for your information. This Statement emphasizes the Commission's intent to (1) coordinate its actions on this matter with the President's Council on Environmental Quality and (2) provide the opportunity for public comments on this proposed action. Public meetings will also be held in the Harrisburg-Middletown area during preparation of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. The first such meeting is scheduled for January 29, 1980. This programmatic environmental impact statement will focus on the environmental issues and alternatives associated with the performance of these clean-up activities.

I trust this response has addressed the questions raised in your letter.

Sincerely,

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Statement of Policy and Notice
of Intent to Prepare a
Programmatic Environmental
Impact Statement dated
11/21/79

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*For previous concurrences
see attached yellow

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Sincerely,

Harold K. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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