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

JAN 9 1980

Mr. R. W. Heggland
Vice President, Minerals
Conoco Incorporated
555 Seventeenth Street
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Mr. Heggland:

This is in reply to your letter of November 19, 1979, about licensing of of nuclear power plants.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is committed to protect the public health and safety. The Three Mile Island accident resulted in a need for changes in the approach to safety. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has found that actions recommended by its own staff and by the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island in the areas of human factors, operational safety, emergency planning, nuclear power plant design and siting, health effects, and public information are necessary and feasible.

At this time we are preparing for review and approval by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission an Action Plan that will specify the precise actions to be taken. This Action Plan will include new or improved safety objectives, detailed criteria for their implementation, and various implementation deadlines. Our goal is to have approved NRC requirements available to all utilities shortly after February 15, 1980.

It is recognized that there will be a significant effect on the availability of power generating capacity if those plants now in the final stages of construction do not receive operating licenses by the dates previously anticipated, and every effort is being made to avoid unnecessary delays.

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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| RECIP. NAME | RECIPIENT AFFILIATION |
| DENTON, H.R. | Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation |

POOR ORIGINAL

SUBJECT: Opposes NRC decision to freeze const of nuclear power plants.

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R. W. Heggland
Executive Vice President
Minerals

Conoco Inc.
555 Seventeenth Street
Denver, CO 80202

November 19, 1979

Mr. Harold R. Denton
Director of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 "H" Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Denton:

Against a backdrop of news from Iran and elsewhere that has ominous implications for the security of our future energy supply, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has introduced yet another unsettling element. Its action in imposing a freeze on issuance of operating licenses and construction permits poses the threat of an open-ended delay in nuclear licensing. This is the prospect that the Kemeny Commission feared when it considered several possible nuclear moratorium proposals, and which in the end it rejected precisely for this reason.

The nuclear power industry has already expressed its strong agreement with the thrust of the Kemeny Commission report. It is pledged to remedying the lapses revealed by the Three Mile Island Accident. If there is one deficiency in the Kemeny report, it is a lack of recognition for the tremendous remedial effort that has been mounted in the seven months since the accident by the industry and NRC.

The NRC's freeze seems also to discount this seven month effort. I believe it should not take another seven months, or 12 or 24, to apply the lessons of TMI.

If the NRC persists in imposing this freeze, then it must recognize how illogical it is to hold up operating licenses for a handful of reactors that have had the full benefit of the TMI lessons learned, while at the same time certifying 70 other reactors--some twins of the ones awaiting licenses--as being safe to operate, based on the same TMI lessons. Each such reactor delayed, ultimately costs the consumers some \$2-million a week, just in interest charges, and deprives the nation of energy equivalent to what could power 300,000 automobiles.

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Because the NRC today functions in a heated political environment and is often internally split on nuclear licensing issues, I feel it is urgent that the Commission now set itself a public agenda and schedule for resolving those issues it feels must be addressed in the wake of the Kemeny report. The nation can ill-afford an indefinite hold on nuclear licensing or one that is subjected to politically inspired delays.

Sincerely,



R. W. Hegglund