

United States Senate

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January 15, 1980

Honorable John F. Ahearne, Chairman  
Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
1717 H Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20555



Dear Mr. Chairman:

On October 23, 1979 I wrote to your predecessor, Chairman Hendrie, to express my strong concern over the possible contamination of the Susquehanna River by wastewater from the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. At that time the Nuclear Regulatory Commission had approved plans for the decontamination of wastewater through use of the EPICOR-II process.

Given the serious consequences that any contamination of the Susquehanna River would have for Maryland's water supply and for the Chesapeake Bay, the nation's most productive estuary, I want to repeat my concern that the water quality of the Susquehanna River not be in any way adversely affected by the Three Mile Island decontamination process. Unfortunately, developments over the last two months fail to demonstrate that the NRC has taken adequate steps to ensure that Maryland's environment will not be endangered by the decontamination process.

I am especially concerned that the Commission has not required a completed environmental impact statement on the decontamination and disposal of radioactive wastes at Three Mile Island prior to the discharge of any of these wastes into the environment. While the NRC has announced its intention to prepare an environmental impact statement in connection with the Three Mile Island clean-up, it has not precluded the release of any radioactive wastes into the environment prior to the statement's completion.

Clearly the Commission should not permit any such release before it has the benefit of the detailed analysis and public review and comment that a completed environmental impact statement is designed to provide. I there-

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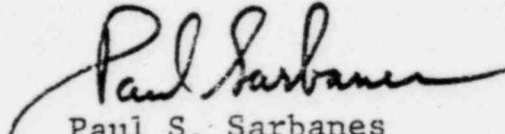
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Honorable John F. Ahearne  
January 15, 1980  
Page 2

fore urge you to issue immediate instructions to prohibit the discharge of radioactive waste from Three Mile Island until an environmental impact statement has been completed. In view of the seriousness of this matter, your prompt response to this letter would be greatly appreciated.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

  
Paul S. Sarbanes  
United States Senator

PSS:jce

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