JAN 18 1980

Charles and Helen Hocker
RD 1, Box 1002
Etters, PA 17319

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hocker:

I am writing in response to your letter to Commissioner Hendrie about your concern regarding discharge of water into the Susquehanna River following the accident at Three Mile Island. I regret that this answer to your letter has been delayed. The accident and its consequences have created a substantial increase in the agency's workload, which has prevented me from responding to you as promptly as I would have liked to.

With regard to your concern about the release of contaminated water, except for releases of liquids containing only low or nondetectable levels of radioactivity to the Susquehanna River, such releases are not currently permitted. Before such releases take place, the impact will be evaluated by the NRC and the evaluation will be made available to the public. By this course of action, we will assure that a thorough assessment is completed prior to release of the contaminated liquids and that the health and safety of the offsite population will be protected.

As a result of releases containing only low or nondetectable levels of radioactivity, the levels of radioactivity in the Susquehanna are indistinguishable from existing background levels at public water supply intakes from the river. These levels have been confirmed by independent measurements made by the NRC, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

An example of the type of evaluation that will be performed is the environmental assessment prepared by the NRC staff concerning the use of EPICOR-II to process contaminated water from the auxiliary building. This assessment addresses only the processing of the water and not its disposal. Prior to disposal, another assessment will be prepared to evaluate the alternative disposal means. A copy of the environmental assessment is enclosed for your information.

With regard to your comments concerning the possible future operation of Three Mile Island Unit 1, the Commission has ordered that a public hearing be conducted to determine whether the facility should be operated and, if so, under what conditions restart of Unit 1 would take place. Prior to start of

the hearings, the NRC staff will conduct a review of technical information concerning the restart of Unit 1. As part of this review, the NRC staff will conduct meetings with the licensee in the presence of the public, and the public will be given the opportunity to raise questions and to make statements. During the hearing, the technical issues which are appropriate to assure the public health and safety will also be addressed. In addition, the Hearing Board may consider the psychological impact of future operation on the nearby communities. A copy of the Commission Order which outlines the issues to be considered is enclosed for your information.

With regard to Three Mile Island Unit 2, the licensee has not yet sent to the NRC a proposal for plant recovery, although the licensee is conducting feasibility studies. It is not possible at this time to determine when such proposals for recovery may be submitted or how much time will be needed for the required reviews and approvals in connection with Unit 2's recovery. I would note, however, that the licensee's authority to operate Unit 2, except for those actions necessary to keep the reactor shut down, was suspended by Order of July 20, 1979.

I appreciate your concerns and 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,

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Encls: EPICOR-II Environmental Assessment
Commission Order, Docket No. 50-289

OFFICE	ANL/TMI	TMI task force	TMI task force	D/TMI-2		
SURNAME	P. Chee *per*	W. Oliu *WEO*	S. Miner *SM*	E. Vollmer		
DATE	1-11-80	1/15/80	1/15/80	1/15/80		