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JAN 8 1980

Mr. Lynn A. Westcott
 521 W. Chatham
 St. Peter, MN 56082

Dear Mr. Westcott:

I am writing in response to your letter to President Carter regarding the hydrogen bubble at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant. I regret that this answer to your letter is too late for you to use in your English class. 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.

For a few days after the accident, there was some concern that a hydrogen bubble in the reactor vessel might react explosively with the oxygen thought to be slowly accumulating in the bubble. There was concern that such a chemical explosion might allow the escape of large amounts of radioactive materials. However, after further consultation with experts, NRC concluded that such an explosion could not occur, because essentially no oxygen would accumulate in the bubble; therefore, there was no time at which the plant could have blown up.

With regard to your question on how radiation might affect the population, you may be interested in sending for a booklet titled "Living with Radiation" prepared by the U.S. Department of Energy. This booklet gives a general explanation of the effects of radiation. The booklet costs \$5.25. Its order number is ERDA-76/89. The booklet can be obtained from the National Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161. Your local public library may also have information on radiation in encyclopedias, books, and other printed matter.

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,

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Harold R. Denton, Director
 Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

OFFICE	ANL/TMI	TMI-2 TF	TMI-2 TF	D/TMI-2 SUP
SURNAME	PChee/mc	Woliu	SMiner	RVollmer
DATE	1/7/80	1/7/80	1/7/80	1/8/80

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