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Central files

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JAN 7 1980

Ms. Frances J. Newcombe  
31 Hayward Avenue  
Lexington, MA 02173

Dear Ms. Newcombe:

Thank you for your letter of April 10, 1979 concerning the accident at Three Mile Island Nuclear Station Unit 2 expressing your views on nuclear power. I apologize for not providing an answer to you sooner, but as you are aware, the Commission and staff have been occupied with continued support of the efforts at Three Mile Island, Orders to other facilities, appearances before the President's Commission and various committees of Congress that are investigating the Three Mile Island accident, and the realignment of our own resources and priorities to give immediate attention to the problems resulting from the accident.

Several NRC staff task forces have been organized to identify and evaluate safety concerns, which originated from the Three Mile Island accident, that merit consideration in the licensing actions for presently operating reactors as well as for those for which operating licenses and construction permits are pending.

The task forces' reviews have disclosed a number of actions in the areas of design and analysis and plant operations that will be required in the short term to provide substantial additional protection of the public health and safety. All nuclear power plants in operation or under construction will be affected to varying degrees by the specific recommendations.

We appreciate your concern 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 Nuclear Station, but at all other nuclear power plants as well.

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POOR ORIGINAL

Ms. Frances J. Newcombe

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With regard to the future use of nuclear energy, the former Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) had a Congressional mandate to develop and promote nuclear energy. When the AEC was abolished in 1974, the NRC was created by Congress for the sole purpose of regulating the commercial production of nuclear energy. The U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) is now responsible for the Federal Government's nuclear research and development activities. Consequently, questions about the future of this energy source should be directed to that agency.

Sincerely,

Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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