

NRC FOR



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555
January 11, 1980

Mr. P. F. Pasqua
Head, Nuclear Engineering Department
University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee 37916

Dear Mr. Pasqua:

Your letter of November 13, 1979, to Chairman Hendrie has been referred to me for reply.

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.

With regard to your concern about effects on the ability to attract and retain students in nuclear engineering programs, this could be very important since the need for trained personnel will be increasing. For example, the NRC is now requiring that there be an on-shift technical advisor at each site of operating nuclear power plants. The Shift Technical Advisor shall have a bachelor's degree or equivalent in a

Mr. P. F. Pasqua

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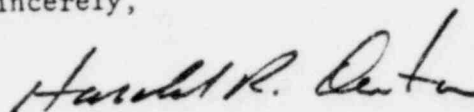
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scientific or engineering discipline and have received specific training in the response and analysis of the plant for transients and accidents and in plant design and layout. He shall be assigned normal duties that pertain to the engineering aspects of assuring safe operation of the plant. The implementation schedule is to have Shift Technical Advisors on duty by January 1, 1980, and to have training requirements completed by January 1, 1981.

The NRC has taken actions and is considering others that substantially increase the qualification of operating plant personnel and believes that utilities will necessarily have to increase their pay scales in order to attract individuals with these qualifications. It is planned to make a study of means of creating a highly motivated and dedicated nuclear work force.

Any specific suggestions you have about dealing with these problems will be welcome.

Sincerely,



Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation