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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

February 14, 1980

Mrs. Joan Mattern
RD #1, Red Hill
Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057

Dear Mrs. Mattern:

Your letter to President Carter expressing your concerns about Three Mile Island and its effects on your family has been referred to me for response. I regret that this answer has been delayed. The accident and its consequences have created a substantial increase in the agency's workload, which has prevented us from responding to you as promptly as we would have liked.

The answer to your question about whether the danger is over is yes. The very small dose of radiation that people in the area received came from radioactive gases that escaped from the auxiliary building. The average dose of radioactivity the population within 50 miles of TMI received was approximately 4 millirems. The maximum exposure to any individual was less than 100 millirems, which is less than the yearly dose each person receives as a result of natural background radiation. Doses at these levels result in less than one health effect over the lifetime of all people in this area. Natural background radiation people in the Harrisburg area receive is approximately 125 millirems per year. To put these doses into perspective, it should be noted that a traveler flying round trip in a jet from New York to Los Angeles receives 5 millirems of cosmic rays.

A team of investigators from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare calculated the doses to the people living within 50 miles of TMI and estimated the number of new cancers that would result from the exposure to the radioactivity that leaked out of the plant. The team reported their work in a report entitled "Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station" (NUREG-0558). They concluded that the offsite collective dose associated with radioactive material released from March 28 to April 7, 1979, represents minimal risks (that is, a very small number of additional health effects to the offsite population). A summary of NUREG-0558 is enclosed for your information.

To address your concern about whether or not TMI will reopen, the Commission has ordered that a public hearing be conducted to determine whether TMI Unit 1 should be operated and, if so, under what conditions the restart would take

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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 that 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 that outlines the issues to be considered is also enclosed for your information.

With regard to Unit 2, the licensee has not yet submitted to the NRC a proposal for overall 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.

In regard to your question about consumer costs, Metropolitan Edison customers will not have to pay for any damages to or for the restoration of Unit 2. The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission, in a decision and order of June 15, 1979, ruled that customers of Metropolitan Edison and the Pennsylvania Electric Company would be free from accident expenses, except for those costs associated with purchasing power to replace power that the TMI facility would have provided.

While we are, of course, concerned about financial impacts on consumers, the NRC's primary responsibility is the assurance of public health and safety. State public utility commissions and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission have primary responsibility regarding the rates that consumers pay for electricity. They should be able to provide information for your use.

In response to your question about employees at TMI, it takes relatively few people to run a nuclear power plant; it may take as few as 10 people per shift to control and monitor a nuclear reactor. Other people are required to perform maintenance and routine tests. Normally, 200 people work at a two-unit nuclear plant like TMI. It will take more people than normally work there to clean up Unit 2 and prepare it for decommissioning or for further operation.

While only your family physician and local realtors can answer your questions about your family's health and the sale of your mother's house, we appreciate

Mrs. Joan Mattern

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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 Three Mile Island, but also at all nuclear power plants.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:
Richard H. Vollmer

Richard H. Vollmer, Director
Three Mile Island Support

- Enclosures: 1. NUREG-0558, Summary
2. Commission Order dated August 9, 1979

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Sep. 2, 1979

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Dear President Carter, (2) Vollmer

This will be a rather long letter and I have my doubts as to whether you will ever see it but here goes and I hope whoever reads it will stick with it to the end.

I have to go back some years to give you the background. My mother was a widow at age 33 and had two children 6 and 12 yrs. of age at that time. It was the year 1937. My father died very suddenly of pneumonia. Mother had to polish her working skills, sell a newly purchased home, learn to drive and move us to her hometown in Middletown, Pa. She worked for the State a few years and then the Federal Govt at Olmsted Air Force Base for the remainder of her working years until retirement age.

My brother was a Navy Pilot and after serving his time, was discharged and started college at John Hopkins Univ. as a pre-dental

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student. He completed one year and then went on reserve duty in Maryland to earn money for school. He was killed Aug. 20, 1948 while practicing dive bombing. He is buried in Arlington.

My mother worked hard and finally built the home she always wanted in 1957. It is a beautiful real stone rancher. She kept it in top condition and many people through the years would say if she ever wanted to sell to let them know. This home is located in R.D. #1, Middletown, Londonderry Twp. on Red Hill. We overlook Three Mile Island.

In February, 1978, Mother became seriously ill for the first time in her life. She was 73 at that time. It resulted in her having a kidney removed, a spleen removed and a huge abscess drained beneath her rib cage. She spent 6 weeks in the hospital, one of these in intensive care. After a lengthy recuperation she again began taking

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care of her home and yard. I must say that the terrifying noises from TMI each time a relief valve malfunctioned were very upsetting to her. At Christmas, 1978, she again had pain and was hospitalized for tests. They found an adhesion but everything else looked fine. From that time until March 29, 1979 when she died she was in constant pain. Finally she was hospitalized again, re-opened and a large metastatic tumor was found attached to an artery leading to her heart. She lived one week after the operation. She was so medicated that news of trouble at TMI never reached her.

I visited her March 29th and while I was there she talked to me saying how feverish she was. I went for ice and when I returned she was dying. The next day while I was at the undertakers word came over the news that evacuation might take place. My Mother was to be buried in

Fort Lincoln, Md. ⁴ with my Father
on Monday. I could not and
would not leave my home until
she was laid to rest. It is a
weekend I will never forget.

A real estate salesman
had approached Mother several
months before her death. Knowing
she had been ill, he gave her his
card and said if she ever decided
the home was too much to take
care of to call him. He would
have no trouble selling it. Now,
no real estate men come near.

We called a friend of my husband's
after trying to sell it privately
was to no avail. This friend is
with the Jack Gaughen agency and
he came & listed it for \$91,500.
After several months of no buyers,
not even a nibble, we have
lowered it to \$89,500. To date we
still have no buyer. I continue
to check the house day & night,
buy oil for it, pay electric and
yard care. I wrote to Met-Ed
and told them the situation

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and suggested they buy it for one of their executives to show their faith in the area. I received a reply saying there are many factors determining the saleability of a home but they would file my claim with their insurance company and list the home with their personnell office. I also received a letter from the insurance company saying the claim is on file but they are not doing anything about such claims yet. I do not believe they ever will. The "many factors" they refer to will no doubt be to blame - not TMI. The home is definitely worth more than we are now asking. In fact, people who know it, say \$100,000 would be a fair price.

Now - problem #2 - My son, Mark, is 13 years old. At age 12 in 1978, he ran a fever of 102° and had diarrhea. He weighed 146 1/2 lbs. In approximately six months or even less, he lost 53 1/2 lbs. He had tests

4 more tests. His internist sent
him to a doctor dealing in gastric
diseases. While Mother was in
the hospital at Christmas Mark
was in another as an outpatient
to have tubes put into his stomach.
The doctor suspected giardia (?) - a
parasite of the bowel & wanted
to get proof. He was unable to
get it so instead of putting Mark
through it again, decided to give
him the medicine for it. He
seemed a little better after this
but his bowels have never yet
been normal without medication
& from time to time he runs
a low grade fever. Some people
have asked if I have ever thought
of radiation as causing his problem.
In fact, several days before Mother
died, a good friend wrote asking
me whether I thought + MI had
anything to do with Mother and
Mark's illness. I have never
wanted to think that is the
case but I must say there
are times I wonder.

During this same period of time all this was happening. I developed tennis elbow, my husband has a severe case of hemorrhoids and last week a young man in a pickup truck hit our newest car and it had to be towed away.

I have always been a patriotic person. I love this country and get goose bumps when our National Anthem is played. I also believe deeply in God and know without his help I couldn't have made it through the past year and a half. But now I need to believe in you and what you are doing for us as President. Are you going to allow + NT to reopen? Can you tell me it hasn't hurt me and my family? Is it the cause of my sons illness? Will you let all my Mother worked for and wanted to leave to her family go down the drain because people are afraid of this area? Will you allow met - Ed continue

to waste money + pass the cost
on to us? You can talk to
almost anyone in the area and
hear of their wastefulness. Are
they eliminating the employees
they don't need? Is the danger
over? Everyday we read of more
radiation leaks.

I thank God Mother
did not live to go through this.
It would surely have destroyed
her fighting spirit which she
kept all of her 74 years.

Sincerely,

Joan Mattern
R.D. #1 Red Hill
Middletown, Pa
17057

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