

TERA

FEBRUARY 15 1980

Mr. Steven H. Weiss
P.O. Box 1942
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Dear Mr. Weiss:

I am writing in response to your letter to Commissioner Hendrie concerning the Three Mile Island accident. 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.

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 the Three Mile Island site and estimated the number of new cancers that would result from the exposure to the radioactivity that leaked out of the plant. The team published 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, 1979, to April 7, 1979, represents minimal risks (that is, a very small number of additional health effects to the offsite population). Enclosed for your information is a summary of NUREG-0558.

Although it is generally agreed that epidemiologic studies of the resident population of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, could not detect any excess morbidity or mortality due to radiation exposure from the accident at the Three Mile Island facility, the Center for Disease Control and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (with assistance from the NRC) have conducted a census of the population residing within five miles of Three Mile Island for the purpose of providing an adequate registry for potential future studies of health effects. The Department of Health of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania also is planning to update the population registry every five years over the next three decades. In addition, the Health Department and several Pennsylvania universities are planning or already are conducting studies of health effects including pregnancy outcome, congenital and postnatal thyroid diseases, mental health and cytogenetic abnormalities.

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Although it is unlikely that these studies will be able to unravel the complex etiology of these health effects, the NRC is monitoring the studies and assisting where possible through its Radiological Health Standards Branch.

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,

Richard H. Vollmer
Richard H. Vollmer

Richard H. Vollmer, Director
Three Mile Island Support

Encl: Summary of NUREG-0558

*NOTE: SEE PREVIOUS YELLOW FOR CONCURRENCE

OFFICE ▶	ANL/TMI	TMI TF	TMI TF <i>for</i>	D/TMI Support
SURNAME ▶	*P. Chee	*W. Olu/hmt	S. Miner	R. Vollmer
DATE ▶	1/7/80	2/11/80	2/12/80	2/16/80

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