

Local PDR



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

FEB 07 1980

Mr. Paul Holowka
R-4
York, PA 17404

Dear Mr. Holowka:

I am writing in response to your letters of June 3, 1979 and December 14, 1979, to the Commission regarding 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 us from responding to you as promptly as we would have liked.

I am sorry to hear that the inclement weather last Spring delayed your planting and hope that your crops did well despite the late start. Neither the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) nor the nuclear industry engages in "cloud seeding" or any other meteorological activity and could not have contributed to the rainfall that you described.

Radioactive gases that escaped from Three Mile Island resulted in a very small dose of radiation to the population. The average dose of radioactivity received by the population within 50 miles of Three Mile Island was approximately 2 millirems. The maximum exposure to any individual was less than 10 millirems. To put these doses into perspective, it should be noted that a traveler flying round trip in a jet between New York City and Los Angeles receives about 5 millirem from increased exposure to cosmic rays. Natural background radiation in the Harrisburg area is about 125 millirems per year. Doses at levels of about 2 mrem might result in less than one health effect over the lifetime of all people in this area.

In your December 14, 1979, letter you sent us samples of allegedly atrophied ringneck pheasant testicles. You speculated that the testicles were atrophied due to radiation released from the power reactors at Three Mile Island. The NRC requires all reactor licensees to routinely monitor the environment around nuclear power plants. The NRC periodically reviews the environmental monitoring reports to make certain that there is no unanticipated buildup of radioactivity in the environment. Based on our review of these reports, we conclude that there has not been any excessive buildup of radionuclides in the environment near Three Mile Island or any other nuclear power reactor.

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Mr. Paul Holowka

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However, to be certain that important information was not overlooked, we sent your samples to the Idaho Operations Office of the Department of Energy to determine their radioactivity concentration. The Idaho Operations Office reported that only background radiation (i.e., radiation not due to Three Mile Island) was detected. Subsequently, Mr. Dale Sheffer, Chief of Game Management of the Pennsylvania Game Commission examined the testicles. Mr. Sheffer has told us that the size of the pheasant testicles is normal for the non-mating part of the year. Pheasant testicles may increase by about a factor of 5 during the mating season. Since we do not know the time you collected your sample, it is likely that the testicles are not atrophied but are normal. In any event, we conclude that the testicles do not contain any radioactivity associated with the Three Mile Island accident. I am enclosing a summary of the report entitled "Population Dose and Health Impacts of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station", for your further information.

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,

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Summary of NUREG-0558

POOR ORIGINAL

ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP Date
1/2/80

TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post)	Initials	Date
1. Bill Kreger	WJK	1/2
2. Sid Miner		
3. cc: R. Vollmer		
4.		
5.		

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Approval	For Clearance	Per Conversation
As Requested	For Correction	Prepare Reply
Circulate	For Your Information	See Me
Comment	Investigate	Signature
Coordination	Justify	

REMARKS

Attached is a letter from Paul Holowka dated June 3, 1979 and a proposed response to the letter prepared by Argonne. Since you are responding to his December 14, 1979 letter, I suggest you incorporate our response to his earlier letter into your letter.

Thanks
WJK

DO NOT use this form as a RECORD of approvals, concurrences, disposals, clearances, and similar actions

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Syd Miner/TMI-2 Support	537 PHIL
	Phone No.
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