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The Honorable G. J. Thompson
Secretary, Department of Social and Health Services
Olympia, Washington 98504

Mr. J. O. Wood
Director, Washington State Energy Office
400 E. Union
Olympia, Washington 98504

Gentlemen:

This letter is in reference to the meeting of January 11, 1980, between you, members of your staff, General Public Utilities (R. Arnold, S. Henck, R. McGoey, B. Rusche) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (R. Weller) on the subject of shipments of solid radioactive waste from Three Mile Island Unit 2 to the low level waste burial site in Richland, Washington. The General Public Utilities officials provided you with an overview of the projected Three Mile Island Unit 2 solid radioactive waste generation rates, the existing solid waste storage facilities, and the results of the resin liner dewatering study tests. Specifically, you requested that the NRC provide you with written approval of the General Public Utilities dewatering program for spent resin from Three Mile Island Unit 2. This letter is in response to your request.

In response to increased concern by Federal and State regulators of packaged solid radioactive waste over the quantities of free water in packaged waste and the development of criteria limiting those quantities, General Public Utilities (GPU) initiated a program to study various liner dewatering techniques, determine the parameters which influence liner free water, and quantify the amount of free water which could be expected in a dewatered liner upon arrival at the burial site. The NRC/TMI Technical Support Staff has followed and evaluated the GPU dewatering program since its inception, including review of the GPU summary report to the NRC on liner dewatering, a copy of which was forwarded to you in a letter from R. C. Arnold, Senior Vice President, Met-Ed dated January 16, 1980. We conclude that the GPU liner dewatering procedure is acceptable and results in a quantity of free water (approximately 1.5 gallons in a 145 ft³ liner) which is well below current burial site acceptance criteria (i.e., less than 1% free water by volume). We do not believe that the GPU liner dewatering results are likely to improve without significant liner re-design and that the present dewatering procedure represents an optimization of the program. Since the small amount of free water (1.5 gallons) is essentially de-ionized water,

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The Honorable G. J. Thompson
Mr. J. O. Wood

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it should pose little threat to the health and safety of the public. As has been the practice of the NRC on-site staff, we will continue to provide surveillance of all radioactive waste shipments leaving TMI for Hanford, Washington.

We hope this has been responsive to your request. If you, or members of your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

John T. Collins
Deputy Director
NRC/TMI Technical Support Staff

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