



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

February 28, 1980

Ms. Louise Dufour  
Box 109  
Kimberton, Pennsylvania 19442

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS  
POOR QUALITY PAGES

Dear Ms. Dufour:

Thank you for your postcard requesting information about the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear station and about hearings for the facility's re-start. 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 release of radioactive gases from the reactor building of TMI Unit 2 is not currently permitted. Before the gases are disposed of by any method, NRC will evaluate the impact and the evaluation will be made available to the public. The Commission has also decided that concerned citizens should be given the opportunity to present their views orally at a public meeting prior to any approval of proposals to dispose of radioactive gases in the TMI Unit 2 reactor building. By this course of action, we will assure that a thorough assessment is completed prior to release of the contaminated gases and that the health and safety of the offsite population will be protected.

Your postcard apparently refers to the release to the Susquehanna River of 4,000 gallons of water containing strontium-90, a radioactive element that emits beta radiation. The entire event started as a normal routine release of waste water from the Unit 1 waste evaporator condensate test tank. Prior to initiating a release, the licensee is required by plant technical specifications to sample the contents of the tank and analyze the sample for the principal gamma emitters. In addition, the licensee is required by the technical specifications to take a portion of that sample and add it to the composite sample of all previous batches of liquid releases made during the month. At the end of the month, the composite sample is analyzed for strontium-89 and -90. The licensee completed both of these actions. It should be noted that the NRC does not require that the analysis for strontium be performed on every batch prior to release because the concentration of strontium is normally well below the detection limits of the analytical methods and orders of magnitude lower than the principal gamma emitters, such as iodine and cesium.

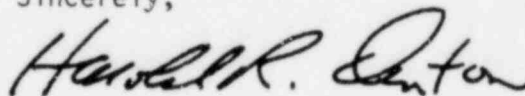
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On July 26, 1979, the release from Unit 1 was initiated; during the release an NRC inspector questioned the licensee as to whether or not a gross beta analysis had been performed. At that point, Metropolitan Edison management suspended the release and performed a number of analyses. The analysis for concentrations of strontium-89 and -90 indicated that prior to discharge to the river, the effluent concentrations for these isotopes were within both federal and state government standards for radioactivity. In the future, nevertheless, Metropolitan Edison will monitor all water discharges for beta radiation.

With regard to your request for information about when the hearings on the restart of Unit 1 are scheduled, no date has yet been set. When the date is determined, notice will be published in local newspapers and in the Federal Register. Copies of the Federal Register should be available in local public and school libraries.

I am pleased to provide you with this information.

Sincerely,



Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

7-30-79

Please put me on your mailing list.

I want to receive documentation on  
the purging of TMI 2 containment vessel  
+ the venting of KLR-85 + the <sup>3</sup> **XEO1**  
radioactive waste water. **S 011**

How did Met Ed get 4000 gallons of radioactive water  
into the Susquehanna July 25<sup>th</sup> before the NRC took action?  
That is outrageous. Please inform me when hearings for TMI  
are scheduled. Thank you **Louise D. [unclear]** **7908060297**