

FEBRUARY 28 1980

Dr. James R. Spang
118 November Drive, Apt. 4
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Dear Dr. Spang:

I am writing in response to your letter to Commissioner Joseph Hendrie containing the text of your editorial on 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.

With regard to TMI Unit 1, the Commission has ordered that a public hearing be conducted to determine whether the facility should be operated and, if so, under what conditions restart of Unit 1 would take 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 which 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 which outlines the issues to be considered is enclosed for your information.

With regard to Three Mile Island Unit 2, the licensee has not yet sent to the NRC a proposal for 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.

With regard to your statement concerning remote siting of nuclear power plants, the President's Commission in its report (the Kemeny Report) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Special Inquiry Group Report (the Rogovin Report) recommended revisions to NRC siting criteria and regulations, which we are currently reviewing. We are also reviewing Commission staff concerns regarding population density to determine whether changes in siting criteria and regulations should be made.

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As you doubtless are aware, while we are concerned about the financial impacts of nuclear energy consumption for consumers, the primary responsibility of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is the assurance of public health and safety. Nonetheless, I thank you for the opportunity of learning your views on consumer and investor interests in nuclear power.

Sincerely,

Original signed by
E. G. Case

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Encl: Commission Order, Docket No. 50-289

OFFICE	ANL/TMI	TMI task force	TMI task force	D/TMI-2	
SURNAME	P. Chee	W. Olin	S. Miner	R. Vollmer	
DATE	1-7-80	2/11/80	2/12/80	2/14/80	