



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

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February 27, 1980

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS
POOR QUALITY PAGES

The Honorable Harry Hughes
Governor of Maryland
Annapolis, Maryland 21404

Dear Governor Hughes:

I appreciate your letter of December 31, 1979 expressing concern about cleanup activities at Three Mile Island and offering suggestions regarding procedures the Commission should follow. The program which the Commission intends to follow will, I believe, be responsive to your concerns and suggestions.

Consistent with your view on the need for a prospectus on the cleanup operation, General Public Utilities (GPU) has already submitted a "Summary Technical Plan for TMI-2 Decontamination and Defueling," dated December 12, 1979. This plan appears to be generally compatible with the tentative program prepared by the NRC staff. I am enclosing a copy of an NRC staff draft response to Congress, which describes the staff program and also contains the GPU plan as an attachment.

The Commission will seek public comment regarding the extent to which the programmatic environmental impact statement should address specific actions in the cleanup program. The staff has held several of these EIS scoping meetings (January 29, 1980 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; February 12 in Middletown, Pennsylvania; and February 15 at the University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus). In addition, in response to a request by Maryland Delegate Catherine Riley, Mr. Richard Vollmer attended a meeting on February 1 in Havre de Grace, Maryland, at which many of these issues were discussed with public and local officials.

Pending completion of the programmatic statement (and appropriate supplements as decontamination progresses), it is the Commission's intention that, except in the event of an emergency, no radioactive discharges will be authorized except as stated in the enclosed May 25, 1979 Commission Statement. As further noted in the November 21, 1979 Commission Statement of Policy, copy enclosed, no new approvals for decontamination of waste water nor releases of radioactive gas from the TMI-2 containment will be allowed prior to environmental review and opportunity for public comment. This opportunity, of course, extends to the State of Maryland and the Commission will be pleased to have Maryland's views on any such proposals. The Atomic Energy Act provides for public participation in license amendment proceedings, should amendments to the facility license be required in connection with decontamination activities.

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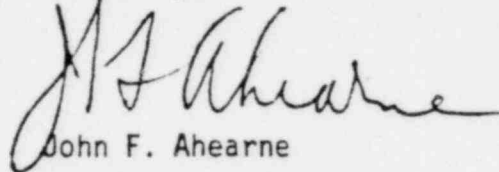
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The Honorable Harry Hughes

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The Commission will provide ample notice to allow Maryland and other interested parties to comment on proposed discharges prior to the granting of any authorization for discharges. Obviously, if Maryland wishes to arrange with Pennsylvania for monitoring these discharges, such arrangements do not require NRC approval. Commissioners Bradford and Gilinsky would have gone a step further and would have directed the staff to contact appropriate Maryland officials to arrange for monitoring of any proposed discharges.


Sincerely,



John F. Ahearne

Enclosure:

1. NRC staff draft response
to Congress
2. May 25 and November 21, 1979
Commission Statements



RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

IN

NOVEMBER 20, 1979 LETTER

FROM

SENATOR GARY HART

AND

SENATOR ALAN K. SIMPSON

DUPE

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**Summary
Technical Plan
for TMI-2 Decontamination
and Defueling**

Metropolitan Edison Company
December 12, 1979

DJPE 7912270202

STATEMENT

The staff is directed to prepare an Environmental Assessment regarding proposals to decontaminate and dispose of radioactively contaminated waste water from the Three Mile Island facility. The Assessment will be divided into several portions. The first portion of the Assessment will deal with the proposed decontamination of intermediate-level waste water using the EPICOR-II system at TMI. The Assessment should include discussion of potential risks to the public health and safety, including occupational exposures and the risk of accidental releases, and a discussion of alternatives to the EPICOR-II system. Pending completion of this portion of the Assessment and opportunity for public comment, the staff should direct the licensee not to operate the EPICOR-II system. Testing of the EPICOR-II system without using contaminated waste may proceed. Except for discharge of waste water decontaminated by the existing EPICOR-I decontamination system^{1/} and discharge of industrial waste water^{2/} as consistent with the facility operating licenses, no discharge of waste water shall be permitted until completion of a second portion of the Assessment dealing with any such proposed discharges. This portion shall include a discussion of alternatives to discharge into the Susquehanna River. The decontamination and disposal of high-level waste water will be the subject of a subsequent Assessment. However, the Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation may authorize measures deemed necessary to cope with an

^{1/} Primarily pre-accident waste water from Unit 1 which has been partially contaminated by water from Unit 2, with an activity level of less than 1 microcurie per cc. prior to treatment and with an activity level approximately 10^{-7} microcuries per cc. in the discharge canal after treatment.

^{2/} Waste water slightly contaminated (approximately 10^{-7} microcuries per cc.) due to leakage from secondary plant service support systems. The discharge of this industrial waste water is necessary to maintain TMI Unit 2 in a safe condition.

DJPE 7909140564
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STATEMENT OF POLICY AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO
PREPARE A PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

AGENCY: U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

ACTION: Statement of Policy

SUMMARY: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has decided to prepare a programmatic environmental impact statement on the decontamination and disposal of radioactive wastes resulting from the March 28, 1979 accident at Three Mile Island Unit 2. For some time the Commission's staff has been moving in this direction. In the Commission's judgment an overall study of the decontamination and disposal process will assist the Commission in carrying out its regulatory responsibilities under the Atomic Energy Act to protect the public health and safety as decontamination progresses. It will also be in keeping with the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act to engage the public in the Commission's decision-making process, and to focus on environmental issues and alternatives before commitments to specific clean-up choices are made. Additionally, in light of the extraordinary nature of this action and the expressed interest of the President's Council on Environmental Quality in the TMI-2 clean-up, the Commission intends to co-ordinate its actions with CEQ. In particular, before determining the scope of the programmatic environmental impact statement the Commission will consult with CEQ.

The Commission recognizes that there are still areas of uncertainty regarding the clean-up operation. For example, the precise

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