

MAR 24 1980

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8004280342

MAR 24 1980

Mrs. Maria Gambino
16 Nissley Drive
Middletown, PA 17057

Dear Mrs. Gambino:

I am writing in response to your letter to Commissioner Hendrie regarding the Three Mile Island plant. 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.

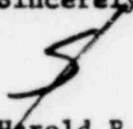
With regard to your comments concerning the possible future operation of Three Mile Island Unit 1, the Commission has ordered that a public hearing be conducted to determine whether the facility should be operated and, if so, under what conditions restart of Unit 1 would take place. Prior to start of 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.

To address your questions about the water in the reactor building, currently there are about 500,000 gallons of water in the reactor building that are being contained. Metropolitan Edison has yet to propose a method for disposal of this water. The Commission has recently authorized use of the EPICOR-II water treatment system for processing the waste water stored in tanks in the auxiliary building. We do not currently permit the discharge of water processed by the EPICOR-II system. The disposal of the water processed by EPICOR-II will be addressed in a separate Environmental Assessment, as required by the Commission's Statement of May 25, 1979. Copies of the Environmental Assessment will be made available for public comment. Since Metropolitan Edison has not yet submitted a proposal on the disposal method of the decontaminated water, we have yet to prepare the Environmental Assessment. We anticipate that several months will pass before any decisions are made on disposal of the water. The building containing the water is heated so there is no danger of it freezing.

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

Encl: Commission Order,
Docket No. 50-289

OFFICE	ANL/TMI	TMI task force	TMI task force	D/TMI 2		
SURNAME	P. Chee	W. Olieu	S. Miner	R. Vollmer		
DATE	2-15-80	2/22/80	2/22/80	2/25/80		