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Mrs. M. Broude  
4730 Tampa Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19120

Dear Mrs. Broude:

Your letter to the Commission regarding the disposal of radioactive water from the Three Mile Island nuclear station has been referred to me for response. 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.

Except for releases to the Susquehanna River of liquids containing only low or nondetectable levels of radioactivity, releases of contaminated water are not currently permitted. Before such releases take place, NRC will evaluate the impact and the evaluation will be made available to the public. By this course of action, we will assure that a thorough assessment is completed prior to release of the contaminated liquids and that the health and safety of the offsite population will be protected.

The Commission 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. As 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.

As a result of releases containing only low or nondetectable levels of radioactivity, the levels of radioactivity in the Susquehanna are indistinguishable

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from existing background levels at public water supply intakes from the river. These levels have been confirmed by independent measurements made by the NRC, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

We 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.

Sincerely,

Harold R. Denton, Director  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Docket 50-289/50-320

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