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

APR 3 1980

Mr. Anthony Spirito
c/o Setauket School
Main Street
Setauket, NY 11733

Dear Anthony,

I appreciate receiving your letter on the accident at Three Mile Island. I am sorry that my answer to your letter has been delayed for so long. We have been very busy here because of the accident.

The radioactive materials that were released were primarily radioactive gases. The radioactivity was almost entirely from xenon, which is a chemically inactive gas. As the gases leaked out, the winds diluted them. To determine if food grown in the area was contaminated, the Department of Energy measured the amounts of radioactivity present in the samples of soil, water, air, and vegetation.

Based on these samples and on other information, it was concluded that the principal isotopes in the escaped gases were xenon-133 and xenon-135. Although radioactive iodine was found in samples of some milk, the concentration was less than 1% of the concentration permitted by NRC regulations. Other food samples were tested by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and none of the 377 food samples tested contained reactor-produced radioactivity.

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

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation