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April 30, 1980

Dr. Bernard J. Snyder, Program Director
Three Mile Island Program Office
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Dr. Snyder:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on NRC's "Environmental Assessment for Decontamination of the Three Mile Island Unit 2 Reactor Building Atmosphere," which arrived on Monday, April 28, 1980.

Over the past two evenings, I read every detail of the report and addenda. Especially in view of the verbal abuse and threats of violence to which your staff has been subjected by cynical agitators and emotionally unstable people, the report is a model of objective and satisfactorily detailed analysis.

I am in complete agreement with your recommendation that the venting/purging be undertaken before arrival of summer meteorological conditions to facilitate optimal diffusion. Although I regret the all too obvious importance of accomodating the recent bellicose expression of what I assume to be the long-term anxiety or hysteria neuroses of a small group in this area, I must also agree with your recommendation that the building purge system be used in conjunction with the hydrogen control system.

However, if the latter is the option selected, I hope for the good of the Commission and for the industry as a whole, that a paid public relations campaign will be undertaken to detail the steps which you have taken to facilitate public expression and respond to public concern. I suspect that there are legitimately disinterested business groups which would consider assisting in the organization and funding of such a campaign. Unless I am advised of a likelihood of a seriously counterproductive outcome from such an effort by disinterested individuals, I may discuss the idea with acquaintances in Pennsylvania.

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Dr. Bernard J. Snyder

-2-

By way of certification of my own disinterested status, I am a regional economic development planner employed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and I have no financial investments in any utility or manufacturer of utility equipment.

Why am I concerned? As a regional development planner, I know all too well that Pennsylvania (and West Virginia) are the heart of the Mid-Atlantic region which is victimized worse than any other region in the country by declining business investment and chronically cyclical unemployment. Grossly inadequate rail freight service is an identifiable problem in retaining current business investment and attracting new investment. Complicating the matter is the fact that EPA has declared almost all of our metropolitan air basins as "non-attainment" air quality regions. In this situation, rail electrification powered by environmentally clean nuclear power is an impressively specific solution to several of our problems. That option becomes the more attractive when the lead-time for financially and environmentally viable coal syn-fuel development is considered on the one hand, with a projected growth in the use of personal and light commercial electric vehicles recharging and eroding present off-peak load capacity margins by the end of the decade on the other hand.

Given the increasing economic disincentives for oil-fired boilers, limited supplies of natural gas, vastly increased radioactive emissions from coal combustion (compared to nuclear), the CO₂ and acid rain problems from coal, early (but not yet conclusive) indications of heavy metal stormwater run-off and radon 222 emissions from costly and inefficient solar panels, nuclear generation of electricity looks better to me every day.

However, in view of limited uranium supplies and the costs in terms of human health and environmental damage from uranium mining, I would very much like to see an active program of breeder reactor development which would roughly synchronize their plutonium output with fuel needs of light-water reactors. Obviously, if such a program could be developed, our present logistical problems with waste disposal would be minimized significantly.

By this point, I'm sure you have realized that I favor a prompt reactivation of TMI Unit 1 and, pending the discovery of any feasibility contra-indications during clean-up, the restoration of Unit 2 to service at the earliest possible date.

Dr. Bernard J. Snyder

-3-

In my view, the regulatory fate and consequent financial future of GPU and Med Ed are critically important issues for Pennsylvania's future. What we plainly cannot sustain without unconscionable economic damage is a regulatory climate at either state or federal levels which discourages utility capital investment and modernization, thereby raising serious questions about our near and moderate term capability to provide adequate electric power for industry's needs at reasonably competitive rates.

I know all too well that vociferous members of single-issue groups will understand none of this unless or until their own employment is affected. Simple-mindedness nourished by determined rage is a formidable incapacity to overcome. Yet, in view of the far-reaching consequences of decisions on TMI, the opinions of *les enfants terribles*, in my opinion, should be the last factors to be considered except where political considerations must be taken into account.

The opinions expressed in this letter are altogether my own in the sense that they do not constitute any policy or opinion of any agency in Pennsylvania State Government. At the May meeting of the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority, however, I will urge the Board to support the krypton venting of Unit 2 through enactment of a resolution.

Very truly yours,

David S. Messner

David S. Messner, Chairman
Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority