



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

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Friends United for Safe Energy
P. O. Box 914
Greenville, SC 29602

Dear Friends United:

Your mailgram concerning the Three Mile Island accident was forwarded to me for reply. We regret that, because of a marked increase in the Commission's workload, so much time has passed before we could respond.

As you are no doubt aware, measurements of radioactive releases during the accident made by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Radiation Protection and several federal agencies did not warrant that the NRC recommend a general evacuation of the population near the Three Mile Island nuclear station. A precautionary health measure that was issued during this time was the advisory issued on March 30 by Pennsylvania Governor Richard Thornburgh recommending that pregnant women and preschool aged children leave the area within a five-mile radius of the reactor. That recommendation was in effect until April 9, 1979.

Subsequent studies of these releases indicated that they were very low.

The very small dose of radiation that was received by people in the area came from radioactive gases that escaped from the auxiliary building. The average dose of radioactivity received by the population within 50 miles of Three Mile Island was approximately 4 millirems. The maximum exposure to any individual was less than 100 millirems, which is less than the yearly dose each person receives as a result of natural background radiation. Doses at these levels result in less than one health effect over the lifetimes of all people in this area. Natural background radiation received by people in the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, area is approximately 125 millirems per year. To put these doses into proper perspective, it should be noted that a traveler flying round-trip in a jet between New York City and Los Angeles receives 5 millirems from cosmic rays in the natural background.

I am enclosing a summary of an NRC report titled "Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station," which may be of interest to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Harold R. Denton".

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Encl: Summary of NUREG-0558