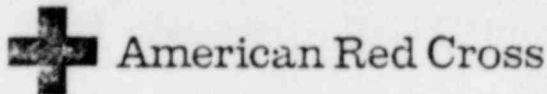


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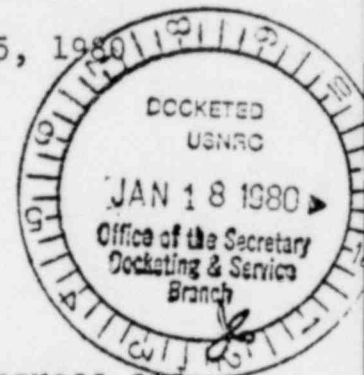
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National Headquarters
Washington, D.C. 20006

January 15, 1980

Secretary of the Commission
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555



Dear Sir:

As a disaster relief agency chartered by the Congress and extensively involved in nuclear accident planning and response, the American Red Cross would like to offer the following comments re the proposed rules on Emergency Planning published by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in the Federal Register, Volume 44 No. 245 on Wednesday, December 19, 1979.

On the basis of our experience during the Three Mile Island accident and questions that have arisen in relation to planning elsewhere, we would generally favor those alternative sections of the proposed rule changes which would automatically require suspension of operating licenses if state and local emergency plans were deemed inadequate. We believe this is necessary if NRC and the Federal Emergency Management Agency are to be able to enforce requirements for this kind of planning.

The major weakness of the proposed rule changes, in our opinion, is the omission of any statements regarding financial responsibility for implementation of the emergency plans if such implementation is ordered by appropriate state or local authorities during and after a nuclear reactor accident. Under existing law, federal reimbursement to state and/or local governments for costs involved in disaster response is available only in the event of a Presidential declaration that an emergency or major disaster exists. In the Three Mile Island situation, no such declaration was made.

Generally, the Red Cross role in nuclear accident response planning has been to be prepared to provide mass shelter and mass feeding support for any evacuation ordered by appropriate state or local authorities. Such assistance was provided by the Red Cross after Three Mile Island. A Red Cross shelter was operated for pregnant women and pre-school children at the Hershey Park Arena, and Red Cross staff and volunteers worked with the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and its county and local counterparts on preparations to house and feed several hundred

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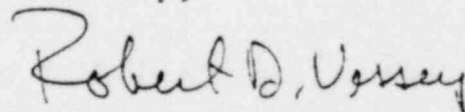
thousand potential evacuees. Red Cross expenditures in providing mass shelter and mass feeding to a potentially large population in the event of a nuclear accident could be substantial.

Because the Red Cross and possibly, some local governments do not have the funds to absorb such costs over an extended period of time, we believe the financial liability role of both the plant operator and the American Nuclear Insurance Company for supporting an officially ordered emergency evacuation should be set forth in the regulations. At TMI, the insurance carrier moved swiftly to provide funds to evacuees so they could move from the shelter to motels, but only about 150 families were involved. The elapsed time would undoubtedly be greater if hundreds of thousands of individuals were in Red Cross shelters. Even the availability of affordable housing, such as motels, would be a major question.

Since a nuclear accident involves potential owner liability, we believe that financial accountability must be a part of the required emergency plans in which NRC/FEMA are to concur.

We would be happy to discuss this question with NRC staff or the commissioners if they so desire.

Sincerely,



Robert D. Vessey
National Director
Disaster Services