



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

APR 3 1980

Mr. Kevin Stuhn
2717 Hamilton Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Mr. Stuhn:

I am writing in response to your letter to President Carter regarding nuclear power plant safety. I regret that this answer to your letter has been delayed. The accident at three Mile Island and its consequences have created a substantial increase in the agency's workload, which has prevented me from responding to you as promptly as I would have liked to.

In answer to your first question, any company that wishes to build a nuclear power plant must obtain construction and operation licenses from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). To obtain these the company must submit detailed design, construction and operation plans for the plant. These are carefully reviewed by our staff and approved only if they comply with many health and safety standards. Also there are inspections to see if these plans are actually done or being carried out according to the conditions of the license. If not, there are enforcement methods to ensure that the terms of the license are complied with. After a plant is built and operating, there are inspections to ensure that the plant is following approved operating procedures in order that the public health and safety is protected. Enclosed for your information is a brief explanation of the reactors licensing process.

In answer to your second question, the nuclear reactors at Three Mile Island did meet the licensing requirements enforced at the time the unit was constructed and operated. However, since the TMI-Unit 2 accident, we have taken a number of actions with respect to all nuclear power plants as a result of the incident. Specifically, full-time inspectors have been assigned to each operating plant utilizing Babcock and Wilcox pressurized water reactors like those at Three Mile Island. In addition, all such plants were shut down and the licensees of each plant were instructed to provide us with additional information about their facilities in light of the Three Mile Island incident. After review of the information provided, orders were issued to the licensees that required them to make immediate plant modifications, to provide additional operator training, and to revise certain operating procedures. Additional long-term actions were ordered to further upgrade certain plant systems and operator training and procedures. All of these plants, except of course the Three Mile Island plant, have complied with the orders and have been permitted to resume operation.

In addition, licensees of all operating plants utilizing pressurized water reactors have been instructed to take specific actions with regard to the status of certain equipment, plant procedures, operator actions and facility designs. Licensees of all operating plants, including those utilizing boiling water reactors, have been instructed to provide us with additional information with regard to their facilities in light of the Three Mile Island accident.

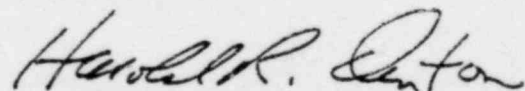
We are currently reviewing the information provided. As soon as our review is complete, orders for modifications, as appropriate, will be issued to provide additional protection to the health and safety of the public.

As a further safety measure, the NRC "Lessons Learned Task Force", in its study of the accident, has recommended the use of Shift Technical Advisors (STA) as a method of immediately improving the plant operating staff's capabilities for response to off-normal conditions and for evaluating operating experience. STA's will serve in an advisory capacity to shift supervisors. Their duties will be to diagnose off-normal events and advise the shift supervisor. The duties of the STA should not include the manipulation of controls or supervision of operators. The STA's will have a clear measure of independence from duties associated with the commercial operation of the plant. This will minimize possible distractions from safety judgements by the demands of commercial operations. The STA may serve more than one unit on a multi-unit site, but must be available within ten minutes of being summoned.

The STA shall have a bachelor's degree or equivalent in a scientific or engineering discipline and have received specific training in the response and analysis of the plant for transients and accidents. The STA shall also receive training in plant design and layout, including the capabilities of instrumentation and controls in the control room. The licensee shall assign normal duties to the STA's that pertain to the engineering aspects of assuring safe operations of the plant, including the review and evaluation of operating experience.

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, not only at the Three Mile Island Station, but also at all nuclear power plants.

Sincerely,



Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Encl: Reactor Licensing Process Description

March 29 (73)
2717 Hamilton St.
La Crosse Wisconsin, 54601

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NRU
The President
White House
Washington D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President;

I am a senior at Logan Senior High School in La Crosse Wisconsin, and have been asked to write to you on an issue that concerns me - I am concerned about nuclear research and safety.

Yesterday afternoon (March 28), the pumps used to cool the reactor at 3 Mile Island, Nuclear Power Plant in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania stopped working. A gas containing nuclear gas escaped into the air. Fortunately, no one was contaminated.

I would like to know ^① what safety precautions and inspections must be met before a building of such calibre is determined able to operate. Also, did the building in Pennsylvania meet those standards, and ^② what engineers, if any, are present to prevent or sustain any similar accident from happening again.

Thank you for your time and concern.

Respectfully,
Kevin Stuebs

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