

The Honorable Patricia R. Harris

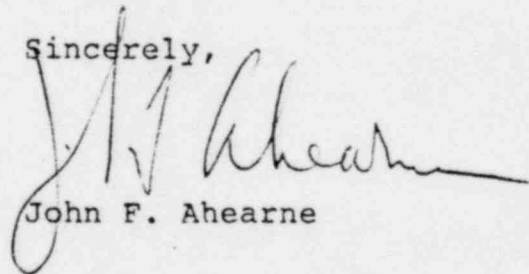
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Finally, as Mr. Rogovin observed in his November 15 memorandum to the Commission, the report of the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island concluded that "the most serious health effect of the accident was severe mental stress."

In view of the concerns expressed by these three separate investigations -- by the NRC's Special Inquiry Group, the President's Commission, and the Governor of Pennsylvania's Commission -- the Nuclear Regulatory Commission believes that it would be desirable for your Department to evaluate these proposals and to consider what remedial programs may best address the problems that have been identified. We will direct our staff to provide whatever assistance may be necessary in developing and instituting such programs. The efforts of the NRC staff in this regard will be coordinated by Mr. Bernard Snyder, Program Manager, Three Mile Island Program Office, Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (301/492-7347).

We appreciate your attention to this important public health matter.

Sincerely,



John F. Ahearne

Attachments:

- A. Rogovin memorandum to Commission
- B. Commission letter to Governor Thornburgh
- C. Lt. Gov. Scranton's letter to Commission

November 15, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman Hendrie
Commissioner Gilinsky
Commissioner Kennedy
Commissioner Bradford
Commissioner Ahearne

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FROM: Mitchell Rogovin, Director
NRC/TMI Special Inquiry Group

SUBJECT: NRC RESPONSIBILITY TO ALLEVIATE RESIDUAL FEARS OF TMI-2 AREA
RESIDENTS

The terms of the contract between the NRC and Rogovin, Stern and Hoge, require me to inform the Commission promptly of any matters that might be considered of "immediate public health or safety significance." While the discussion that follows may not literally fall within that standard, it is of sufficient magnitude to bring to your attention at this time.

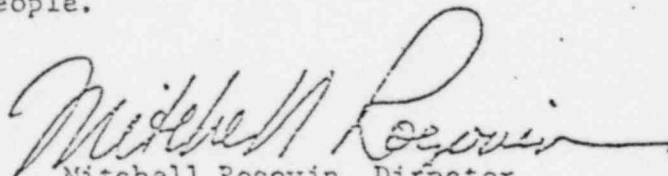
On a recent National Public Radio broadcast, a Middletown, Pennsylvania, resident told of an incident which highlighted to her the impact on the people in the area of Three Mile Island. A friend of hers living in the area indicated she planned to have another child. She was making this move to assure that her son would have a living brother or sister who could act as a donor in the event he developed leukemia or some other form of cancer as a result of the Three Mile Island accident. This striking example highlights the problem of the continuing and sometimes severe mental stress of the local residents in the area of Three Mile Island.

The recently completed socioeconomic impact study by Mountain-West Research, Inc., found that nearly half of the respondents to their survey still feel TMI represents a serious or very serious threat to their families. The recently published report of the President's Commission on the Accident on Three Mile Island found that, "the mental stress to which those living within the vicinity of Three Mile Island were subjected was quite severe." They also conclude that, "the most serious health effect of the accident was severe mental stress." The Commission characterizes this stress as short-lived; however, as indicated above, news media interviews with local residents and the Mountain-West Report would indicate that this stress is of a continuing nature. While the character of the health effects from the TMI-2 accident have been published in various forms including the President's Commission Report, these presentations have been subject to wide interpretation by the press, and have received little emphasis by government agencies in a way which would help the residents near TMI understand how they and their loved ones might be affected.

ATTACHMENT A

We believe that the continuing mental stress of a significant fraction of the residents within the vicinity of Three Mile Island Unit 2 is a serious public health matter for which corrective action should be taken. We believe that an appropriate response to the accident would include a program of informing the local residents of the nature of the threat to them as accurately as possible. Such a non-promotional program should not address the safety of nuclear power plants or the future risks from possible operation of TMI-1 or 2 rather; it should provide sound information on the radiological releases that have occurred and their possible health effects. In addition, the "severe" mental stress experienced by the TMI area residents may warrant the use of human service workers in facilitating more comprehensive care for those who may develop emotional problems. It may be appropriate for the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to act in accordance with Public Law 93-288, Disaster Relief Aid and Amendment, dated May 1974, in implementing such a program.

While we do not wish to undertake to advise the Commission as to how such a program might be undertaken, we do believe that there is merit to your examination into its need. Therefore, we recommend that the Commission look into the development of a near term program to inform the residents in the area of Three Mile Island of the health effects associated with the accident of March 28. We believe it is essential that, if such a program is carried out it be done by an authoritative, unbiased group clearly independent of the NRC. In addition, the Commission may wish to inform the NIMH of the possible need for services in relief of mental health problems. To wait for issuance of our report to transmit this recommendation to you would unnecessarily add further delay in providing assistance to these people.


Mitchell Rogovin, Director
NRC/TMI Special Inquiry Group

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



November 30, 1979

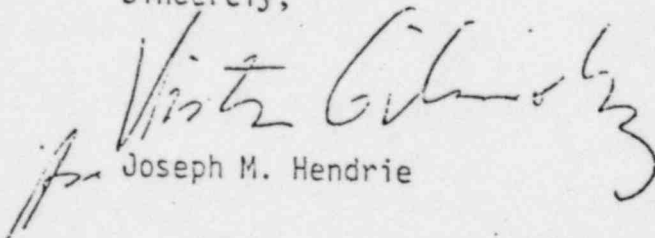
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The Honorable Richard Thornburgh
Governor of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Thornburgh:

On November 15, 1979, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission received a memorandum from Mitchell Rogovin, Director of the NRC's Special Inquiry Group studying the Three Mile Island accident. In that memorandum, a copy of which is enclosed, Mr. Rogovin recommends that the Commission consider the development of a near-term program to alleviate mental stress among residents in the area of Three Mile Island. Recognizing that the responsibility for the health and welfare of those citizens is shared by the State of Pennsylvania and the Federal Government, the Commission believes that your views would be of the utmost value as we evaluate Mr. Rogovin's recommendation.

Sincerely,


Joseph M. Hendrie

Enclosure:
November 15, 1979 memo from
Mitchell Rogovin



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
HARRISBURG
717-787-3300

WILLIAM W. SCRANTON III
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

February 28, 1980

Commissioner Victor Gilinsky
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Commissioner Gilinsky:

Governor Dick Thornburgh has asked me to respond to former Chairman Hendrie's letter of November 30, 1979, regarding the institution of a public education program on the Three Mile Island accident.

The Commonwealth is well aware of the trauma created by the accident for some Central Pennsylvania residents. We also recognize the potential psychological stress posed by the progressive stages of the Unit 2 clean-up.

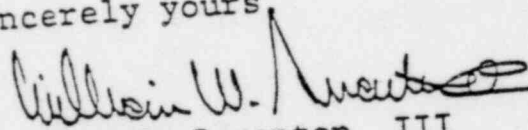
The Governor's Commission on Three Mile Island, which released its report this week, recommended that a public education program be established to meet the needs of specific population groups living near TMI. While its aim was a more general education on radiation hazards and information related to protective actions, the Governor's Commission concluded that such a program was essential to recovery efforts. A copy of the final report has been sent to each member of your Commission.

The Commission report also outlines pressing concerns for prompt decisions on the clean-up of Unit 2. These decisions, though they will be controversial, must be made. A thoughtfully directed education program outlining what the public can expect would go a long way toward building confidence in clean-up management.

Commissioner Victor Gilinsky
February 28, 1980
Page Two

The Thornburgh-Scranton Administration agrees with Mr. Rogovin's concerns on the content and presentation of such a program. The recommendation to have a highly credible, independent group carry out the program is particularly well taken. Appropriate officials from Pennsylvania are available to assist with the preliminary work and I hope that you will call on us.

Sincerely yours,


William W. Scranton, III

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cc: Governor Dick Thornburgh
Secretary Helen O'Bannon, Department of Public Welfare
Secretary H. Arnold Muller, Department of Health