



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

APR 3 1980

Ms. Heather Ann Fitzgerald
2108 Cedar Run Drive
Camp Hill, PA 17011

Dear Heather,

I am writing in response to your letter to President Carter concerning the accident at Three Mile Island. I regret that this answer to your letter has been delayed. The accident 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.

The United States has built and operated nuclear reactors since 1942; radioactivity has been studied in the United States and other countries since the late 1800s. The events that led to the March 28, 1979 accident at Three Mile Island did not result because of a lack of knowledge about nuclear energy, but were due to a combination of equipment problems and human errors. The design and engineering of the containment and auxiliary buildings kept most of the radioactivity from being released to the environment.

A team of investigators from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare calculated the doses to the people living within 50 miles of the Three Mile Island site and estimated the number of new cancers that would result from the exposure to the radioactivity that leaked out of the plant. The team published their work in a report entitled, "Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station" (NUREG-0558). They concluded that the offsite collective dose associated with radioactive material released from March 28, 1979, to April 7, 1979, represents minimal risks (that is, a very small number of additional health effects to the offsite population). Your ability to bear healthy children should not be affected. Enclosed for your information is a summary of NUREG-0558.

All radioactive waste material will be managed so as to keep environmental radioactivity within limits specified by the regulations of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS
POOR QUALITY PAGES

Currently spent fuel rods from reactors are stored at interim storage facilities. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission reviews the facilities in order to assure that the design provides safe methods for this interim storage. The facilities are required to monitor the environment in order to detect any small releases of radionuclides from their areas of containment. Various methods and locations for permanent storage of high-level radioactive wastes are being studied. When the plans for permanent disposal have been approved, wastes will be stored at the permanent sites.

I hope this information will be useful to you.

Sincerely,



Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Encl: Summary of NUREG-0558

4/5/79

(26)

Dear Mr. President,

My name is Heather Fitzgald
I live in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania,
about ten miles from the Three
Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant.
Last Saturday, March 31st, I
turned 13. Many of my friends
live within a five mile radius of
the plant. I have been very
worried and frightened for my-
self and them.

Mr. President, I know virtually
nothing about nuclear energy. How
much do the scientists know about
it? Is it enough for them to
handle a nuclear emergency that
they perhaps know nothing about?
Before the Three Mile Island
incident, I was reassured by the

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government and officials at Three Mile Island through the media that the chances of a nuclear accident such as this one were very, very remote.

I cannot begin to inform you of the thoughts that have been going through my mind these past few days. I was afraid, knowing I had no control over what would happen. I only hope that those who have been doing all they can to the best of their ability will continue to do so. I am extremely proud of my state and federal government for

protecting and informing me
in this time of crisis!

Please tell me, if you can,
what effects this will have on
me. Will I be able to bear
children? Will I develop cancer?
These fears may not even be
justifiable at this time, but
could it be possible, if not
from this mishap but from
another, for these things to
~~be~~ happen to me?

What happens when the
waste materials from the plants
are disposed of? What keeps
this radioactive material from
escaping into the biosphere?

I thank you for your time
and I would be greatly honored
if you would answer this
letter.

Sincerely,

Miss Maureen Ann Fitzgerald
2105 Cedar Run Blvd
Camp Hill, -Pennsylvania 17011