

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

APR 3 1980

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

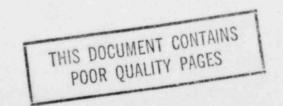
Dear Heather,

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; radio-activity 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.



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

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Dear Mr. President,

My name is reather Tityphald dure in camp Hill, Pennsylvania, about ten miles from the Three Mile Island Muchan Tower Plant.

Thile Island Muchan Tower Plant.

Last Saturday, March 3151, Il turned 13. Many of my friends live within a fine mice radius of the plant. I have been very worried and frightened for my self and them.

much do the scientists know virtually much do the scientists know about handle a muchan smergency that they serhaps know mothing about they serhaps know mothing about I have a fore the Fhree Mile I sland I moident, I was required by the

government and officials at Three Thile I siand through the media that the chances of a muchal accident such as this one well

very, very remote.

you of the thoughts that Thani been going through my mind these fast few days, I was agraid, knowing & had no contine over what would happined my have that those who have iren doing all they can to the liest of so. I am extremely proud of my state and federal government for

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feotecting and informing me in this time of risis! what effects this will have on me. Will I be able to treas children? will I develop conver? These years may not even be -justifiable at Ilhis time, but could it be possible, if not from this mishap that from another, for these things to the hoppen to me? waste materials from the plants are disposed of? what beigh this radioactive material from

and a would be smoothy nonored if you would answer this

Minerchy.

Thus Heather Conn Fitzgerald

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