



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

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APR 3 1980

Ms. Susan Reich
585 E. Market St.
Marietta, PA 17547

Dear Ms. Reich:

Your letter of concern to Mr. Hendrie regarding the Three Mile Island accident was forwarded to me for reply. I regret that this response to your letter has been delayed. Commission activities following the accident and its consequences have prevented us from responding to you as promptly as we would have liked to.

All discharges of water into the Susquehanna River have been carefully monitored since the accident occurred. Your letter makes reference to the release to the river of 4,000 gallons of water containing strontium-90, a radioactive element that emits beta radiation. The entire event started as a normal routine release of waste water from the Unit No. 1 waste evaporator condensate test tank. Prior to initiating a release, the licensee is required by plant Technical Specifications to sample the contents of the tank and analyze the sample for the principal gamma emitters. In addition, the licensee is required by the Technical Specifications to take a portion of that sample and add it to the composite sample of all previous batches of liquid releases made during the month. At the end of the month the composite sample is analyzed for strontium-89 and 90. Both of the above actions were completed by the licensee. It should be noted that the NRC does not require that the analysis for strontium be performed on every batch prior to release because the concentration of strontium is normally (1) well below the detection limits of the analytical method, and (2) orders of magnitude lower than the principal gamma emitters, such as iodine and cesium.

On July 26, 1979, the release from Unit No. 1 was initiated and during the release an NRC inspector questioned the licensee as to whether or not a gross beta analysis had been performed. At this point, Met-Ed management suspended the release and performed a number of analyses. The analysis for concentrations of strontium-89 and 90 indicated that prior to discharge to the river, the effluent concentrations for these isotopes were within both Federal and State government radioactivity standards. In the future, nevertheless, Metropolitan Edison will monitor all water discharges for beta radiation.

With regard to your concern about penalties imposed on Metropolitan Edison for the accident, NRC issued the following press release on January 23, 1980:

"The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has imposed a \$155,000 fine on Metropolitan Edison Company for items of noncompliance with NRC regulations associated with the March 28, 1979, accident at Unit 2 of the Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Station.

"The items of noncompliance involved: inoperable equipment; health physics; failure to follow specified procedures, emergency training and drills; operation of the plant with reactor cooling system leakage in excess of permissible limits; and maintenance of records of worker exposure to radiation.

"Based on the company's December 5 response to an October 25 letter proposing the fine, the staff found that three items of noncompliance originally cited could not be substantiated and the fines were remitted. However, the proposed total fine of \$155,000 was not reduced since it is much less than the cumulative fine of \$717,000. The Atomic Energy Act limits to \$25,000 the cumulative fine for any item of noncompliance in any 30-day period.

"The company has 20 days to pay the fine or request a hearing."

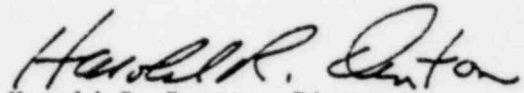
Metropolitan Edison has paid the fine of \$155,000.

You cite your concern that GPU's contracts with Bchtel Corp. and Chem Nuclear ignore "the fact that an environmental assessment has yet to be completed" and that this is another example of the "blatent disregard on the part of TMI owners and operators to abide by agreements which they have made." NRC must review and approve all decontamination efforts at Three Mile Island. Metropolitan Edison can contract for decontamination planning with any firm it deems appropriate. However, unless the plans meet with NRC approval, they cannot be implemented.

With regard to your comments concerning the possible future operation of Three Mile Island Unit 1, the Commission has ordered that a public hearing be conducted to determine whether the facility should be operated and, if so, under what conditions restart of Unit 1 would take place. Prior to start of the hearings, the NRC staff will conduct a review of technical information concerning the restart of Unit 1. As part of this review, the NRC staff will conduct meetings with the licensee in the presence of the public, and the

public will be given the opportunity to raise questions and to make statements. During the hearing, the technical issues which are appropriate to assure the public health and safety will also be addressed. In addition, the Hearing Board may consider the psychological impact of future operation on the nearby communities. A copy of the Commission Order which outlines the issues to be considered is enclosed for your information.

Sincerely,



Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Encl: Order and Notice of Hearing
dated 8-9-79