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Aug. 25, 1979

Chairman J. Hendrie
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555

RE: NRC Ruling Aug. 3, 1979
Three Mile Island

Dear Commission Chairman Hendrie:

I strongly object to referenced ruling classifying the accident at Three Mile Island as NOT "extraordinary" based on the following criteria:

- 1. proof that people off-site received radiation exposure equivalent to 4,000 chest X-rays (20 rem)
- 2. Five or more people died immediately
- 3. at least \$1 million worth of damage

By calling the complete destruction of a nuclear reactor an ordinary event, it would appear that the NRC will settle for nothing less than a core meltdown and bodies in the street to acknowledge an accident has occurred. Even based on your own criteria, the "not extraordinary" ruling is nothing more than a semantic whitewash of the accident and all that followed.

- 1. there is NO proof that people off-site did not receive radiation exposure equivalent to 4,000 chest X-rays. Readings around the plant were reported at one time to be as high as 100 millirem per hour. The initial release of March 30th traveled northeast with the rain and wind of that day, depositing its strontium and cesium all along the way. Independent monitoring of fallout showed readings, in one case, of 100 times above "normal" background radiation, while the readings at Three Mile Island were done by Radiation Management Corp. a subsidiary of General Public Utilities - hardly an independent monitor.
- 2. Does the NRC have proof that there were not increased traffic fatalities or heart attacks in the critical days after March 30th?
- 3. The cost of the reactor alone, the cost of disposal of same, the cost of replacement power, the cost of business interrupted, the long term business losses, such as farms and Hershey chocolate business due to people's fears of contaminated food, the days lost by people fleeing the area, should certainly add up to \$1 million in economic damage, and does not include the incalculable psychosocial damage done to the residents of not only Harrisburg, but throughout the Northeast. Add also the cost to all the taxpayers of the dozens and dozens of "studies", hearings, etc. The accident at TMI literally made the world hold its breath, whether pro-nuclear, anti-nuclear, or ambivalent on the subject. And collectively the world breathed a sigh of relief when the worst was over. By classifying the TMI accident as ordinary - on paper - you are fooling only yourselves. If this is what you term "ordinary" operation, with computers coming up with ~~xxx~~ question marks due to overload, with "experts" giving out contradictory information, misleading information, incorrect information, or just NO information, Heaven help us when an extraordinary accident takes place.

Anna E. Wasserbach

cc: President Carter
Dr. John Kemeny

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