



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

Comm CORR

8005190068

April 25, 1980

The Honorable Richard Thornburgh  
Governor of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120

Dear Governor Thornburgh:

I am writing in response to your letter of February 15, 1980 in which you expressed your deep concerns regarding communications between the NRC and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania officials in response to the accidental release of gaseous radioactive materials from Three Mile Island on February 11, 1980.

The NRC staff has reviewed the pertinent records relating to this event and prepared a summary of the sequence of events during the February 11, 1980 incident. This summary is enclosed for your information. As noted in your letter, the NRC on-site staff became aware of this event at approximately 12:55 p.m. on February 11, 1980. At approximately 1:20 p.m., the NRC staff on site discussed the information then available to the NRC with J. Kopernaver of the Bureau of Radiation Protection. At that time, the final effluent monitors did not show any noticeable increases from readings taken previous to the event. Several hours after the incident was over, Met-Ed made an examination of the strip charts and calculated that approximately 0.3 curie of noble gases had been released. This level of release was less than twice the normal or continuing release rate from the facility and, therefore, was not readily discernible. At no time were any of these releases detected off site. Once this information was available from Met-Ed, it was also transmitted to the Bureau of Radiation Protection.

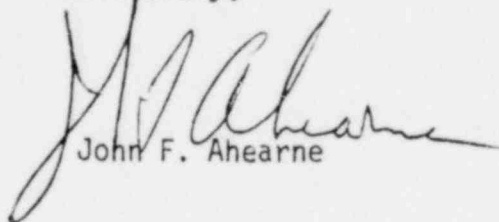
The on-site NRC was making every effort to promptly provide the Commonwealth with current, best available information and to provide periodic updates as additional information became available. We are currently adding resources to the NRC on-site staff for better communication with the Commonwealth, local officials and the public.

Since the incident of February 11, 1980, the licensee has made changes in their notification procedure and revised their emergency plan to include a new category of reportable occurrences. These have been characterized as items which would have potential public significance. Items falling in this category are immediately transmitted to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency and Dauphin County Civil Defense.

The Honorable Richard Thornburgh - 2 -

I trust that these recent actions are responsive to the concerns expressed in your letter.

Sincerely,



John F. Ahearne

Enclosure:  
Sequence of Events

ATTACHMENT

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS AND NOTIFICATION FOR 2/11/80 EVENT

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1220	Initial conditions - "B" makeup pump in operation maintaining reactor coolant system pressure while in natural circulation cooling mode.
1220	Started "A" makeup pump to test pump operability.
1221	Received low discharge pressure alarm on "B" makeup pump.
1237	Stopped "A" makeup pump. Makeup tank level was dropping.
1240	Calculated leak rate based on level drop - approximately 9 gpm.
1250	Shift Supervisor ordered evacuation of Auxiliary Building. NRC/TMI staff members dispatched to Unit 2, based on public address announcement.
1258	Shift Supervisor declared a local emergency.
1310	Increased radiation levels reported on radiation air monitors on the 281 foot elevation of the Auxiliary Building.
1310	Local NRC/TMI staff notified.
1315	Licensee senior management and communications personnel notified of local emergency.
1320	NRC Senior Resident Inspector briefed of situation by the licensee's Emergency Director and Shift Supervisor.
1320 approx.	J. T. Collins (NRC) discussed the information available to the NRC with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Radiation Protection. At that time, the final effluent monitors did not show any noticeable increases from readings taken previous to the event. However, several hours after the incident was over, the licensee made an examination of these monitors' strip charts and then calculated that approximately 300 mCi of noble gases had been released. At no time were any of these releases detected off-site. Once this information was available from the licensee, it was transmitted to the Pennsylvania Bureau of Radiation Protection.

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
1340	Licensee notified the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources. It was discovered that they had already been notified by the NRC.
1428	First press release issued by Communication Services.
1520	Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources notified of updated plant status.
1700 approx.	Second press release issued.
2030	Final press release issued.