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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

February 15, 1980

Mr. John Ahearne
Acting Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Ahearne:

I would like to convey to you my deep concerns about what I regard as a repeat of the kind of communications problem which severely hampered our emergency planning effort during the crisis last year at the Three Mile Island nuclear generating station.

Last Monday, Feb. 11, at approximately 12:55 p.m. there apparently was a pump malfunction at the power plant, a release of highly radioactive water into an auxiliary building, and a release of low-level radioactivity into the atmosphere.

State officials first learned of this incident at 1:20 p.m. from sources other than the company or the commission. Notification came from the commission later, and it dramatically understated the level of radioactivity in the water, while erroneously reporting there had been no release into the atmosphere. I am told that information came to us from the company itself only after we requested it.

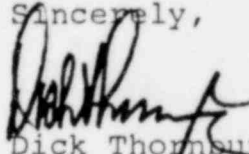
The need for swift, accurate and direct communication was one of the most important lessons to come out of the events of last spring on Three Mile Island. It is my hope that this lesson not be forgotten by any of the parties involved.

Regardless of any technical questions regarding the notification process, I believe this Commonwealth had a clear understanding from the company and the commission that state officials would be notified directly, completely, and immediately of any unusual events at this facility.

This point appears to have been well taken two days later, when the company did give the state prompt notification of another leaking problem.

I respectfully request, however, that you take any and all appropriate steps to see that this is done in the future. The health, safety, and psychological well-being of the people of central Pennsylvania require no less.

Sincerely,



Dick Thornburgh
Governor