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February 25, 1980

Dr. John Ahearne
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Chairman Ahearne:

As you are aware, both the President's Commission on the Accident at Three Mile Island and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's own Special Inquiry Group, headed by Mr. Mitchell Rogovin, pointed out deficiencies in the dissemination of information to the public during the March 28, 1979 accident at Three Mile Island. I was keenly aware of the communication problems and was hopeful that the NRC would ensure that public information would be better handled in the future. Unfortunately, the experience of the most recent incident at Unit II demonstrates that serious problems still exist.

On Thursday, February 14, I went to the NRC office in Middletown, Pennsylvania to inquire as to the status of the pump that leaked on February 11 and the subsequent venting of gases to the atmosphere. I was distressed to find that I was given information which was not in accord with information provided to me by the NRC in Washington. Differing information can only lead to confusion and heightened public anxiety. These problems must be addressed so that the public receives information on the status of events at the site in a timely manner.

It has also come to my attention that the NRC Middletown Office has refused to provide information to the public concerning the status of events at the plant. That office has apparently indicated that the only way this information will be disclosed is through the Freedom of Information Act procedures. If this is the case, it is a demonstration of gross insensitivity to the legitimate concerns of the people residing in the area. The Middletown Office should have daily updates on the conditions at Three Mile Island available for the interested public to review. By failing to be forthright, the NRC further erodes the confidence of the people in the job that the Commission is doing and it feeds rumors of cover-ups. The demands of the people to be kept informed are not unreasonable and I would hope that the

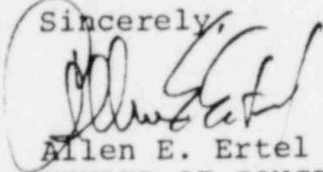
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Middletown Office will be more helpful and informative to the public in the future.

I look forward to hearing from you on this situation and trust that you will be taking actions to correct public information deficiencies.

Sincerely,



Allen E. Ertel
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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