

DISTRIBUTION:

Docket No. 50-320
NRC PDR w/incoming
Local PDR w/incoming
TERA w/incoming
NRR r/f
TMI:PO w/incoming
TMI Site w/incoming
BJSnyder
JTCollins
RWeller w/incoming
MDuncan
HThompson w/incoming

JUL 16 1980

Docket No. 50-320

The Honorable Elizabeth N. Marshall
Mayor of York
York, Pennsylvania 17405

Dear Mayor Marshall:

I am writing in response to your letter of May 21, 1980, regarding the March 24, 1980, newspaper article, which was forwarded to you by Mr. Arthur Q. Boll, Sr. of Mt. Wolf, Pennsylvania. The article titled, "Get Rid of the Krypton Safely", questions the "intentional release" of the krypton-85 gas from the TMI-2 reactor building when a cryogenic processing system is currently available.

Metropolitan Edison Company submitted to NRC a "Safety Analysis and Environmental Report" (November 13, 1979) in which they evaluated four alternative methods for decontamination of the TMI-2 reactor building atmosphere: purging to the atmosphere, charcoal adsorption, gas compression, and cryogenic processing. The cryogenic processing section of the report did discuss the use of the Limerick equipment and stated that it could be made available for use at TMI. The NRC staff evaluated the use of this equipment in considering cryogenic processing as a decontamination alternative in its "Final Environmental Assessment for Decontamination of the Three Mile Island Unit 2 Reactor Building Atmosphere" (NUREG-0662), a copy of which is enclosed for your information (see section 6.6).

In its Final Environmental Assessment, the NRC staff considered the importance of removing the krypton from the reactor building as quickly as possible. In section 5.0 of the assessment, the staff explains that reactor building atmosphere decontamination needs to be expedited to permit a safe and quick completion of all cleanup activities on Three Mile Island. Since the cryogenic processing system would require 20 months or more to design, construct, house, and test before it could go into operation, the NRC staff recommended the purging alternative.

With regard to the article's statement that, "There are scientists who assert that any and all exposure to radiation poses potential harm to present and future generations", the Final Environmental Assessment (see section 7.1) addresses the physical health effects from all alternatives for dealing with the reactor building atmosphere. The staff has determined that there would be negligible physical public health risks associated with the use of any alternative, except the "no action" choice. A similar determination has been made by other independent study groups including two groups of scientists who submitted reports to the Governor of Pennsylvania. (The Union of Concerned Scientists and the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements).

8007300010

OFFICE ▶						
SURNAME ▶						
DATE ▶						

Honorable Elizabeth N. Marshall

-2-

On June 12, 1980, the 5-member Nuclear Regulatory Commission authorized purging of the TMI-2 reactor building atmosphere as the safest and most expeditious way of effecting decontamination of the atmosphere. The purge began on June 28 and ended on July 12 as the concentration of Kr-85 in the building approached the maximum permissible concentration (1×10^{-5} uCi/cc) for occupational workers.

Sincerely,

Bernard J. Snyder, Program Director
TMI Program Office
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:
Final NUREG-0662, Volumes 1 & 2

OFFICE →	TMIP0:NRR	TMIP0:NRR	NRR	NRR		
SURNAME →	RWeller	BSnyder	EGCase	HRDenton		
DATE →		See Previous	concurrency	---		