



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

50-289

AUG 11 1980

Ms. Judith A. Krafsig  
224-4 Lafayette Street  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17109

Dear Ms. Krafsig:

I am writing in response to your letter to President Carter regarding your concerns about Three Mile Island. I regret that this answer to your letter has been delayed for so long. The accident and its consequences have created a substantial increase in the agency's workload, which has prevented me from responding to you as promptly as I would have liked.

Information about the accident made available to the public was confusing for a number of reasons. Some problems were attributable to the sources of information, some to the way in which information was made available to the press, and some to how the press reported the information it obtained. NRC's information was not always complete nor, in some instances, wholly accurate.

We recognize the importance of making complete and accurate information available to the public. Consequently, we have made specific plans for providing information to the public for such potentially serious accidents as occurred at Three Mile Island. These plans include making the availability of public information part of NRC's and the utilities' emergency response planning. Under this policy, the utilities must provide offsite locations for newscenters. We also plan to appoint a senior NRC official responsible for coordinating NRC information activities during an emergency. By centralizing the gathering and dissemination of NRC's information, we will provide the public with relevant and timely information.

The small dose of radiation that people in the area received came from radioactive gases that escaped from the auxiliary building. The preliminary findings of the radioactive materials released are contained in the interagency task force report, "Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station" (NUREG-0558), a summary of which is enclosed. The average dose of radioactivity the population within 50 miles of TMI received was approximately 4 millirems. The maximum exposure to any individual was less than 100 millirems, which is less than the yearly dose each person receives as a result of natural background radiation. Doses at these levels result in less than one health effect over the lifetime of all people in this area. Natural background radiation people in the Harrisburg area receive is approximately 125 millirems per year. To put these doses into perspective, note that a traveler flying round trip by jet from New York to Los Angeles receives 5 millirems of cosmic rays.

Although it is generally agreed that epidemiologic studies of the resident population of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, could not detect any excess morbidity or mortality due to radiation exposure from the accident at the Three Mile Island facility, the Center for Disease Control and the Pennsylvania Department

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of Health (with assistance from the NRC) have conducted a census of the population residing within 5 miles of Three Mile Island for the purpose of providing an adequate registry for potential future studies of health effects. The Department of Health of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania also is planning to update the population registry every 5 years over the next 3 decades. In addition, the Health Department and several Pennsylvania universities are planning or already are conducting studies of health effects, including pregnancy outcome, congenital and postnatal thyroid diseases, mental health, and cytogenetic abnormalities.

Although it is unlikely that these studies will be able to unravel the complex etiology of these health effects, the NRC is monitoring the studies and assisting where possible through its Radiological Health Standards Branch.

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), in a decision and order of June 15, 1979, ruled that costs of damages caused by the accident at Three Mile Island would not be included in the present rate base for customers of Metropolitan Edison and the Pennsylvania Electric Company. These customers will, however, be responsible for costs associated with purchasing power to replace power that the TMI facility would have provided. The Pennsylvania PUC reaffirmed this decision in an order of May 23, 1980.

In the same order, it also ruled that Three Mile Island Unit 1 be removed from the Metropolitan Edison and Pennsylvania Electric Company rate bases. As a result, their customers will be free of all maintenance, interest, and capital cost expenses associated with Unit 1. Should Unit 1 be returned to service, costs associated with its operation would, of course, become part of the rate structure.

While we are, of course, concerned about financial impacts on consumers, the NRC's primary responsibility is the assurance of public health and safety. State public utility commissions and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission have primary responsibility regarding the rates that consumers pay for electricity. They should be able to provide information for your use.

With regard to your comments concerning the possible future operation of Three Mile Island, the Commission has ordered that a public hearing be conducted to determine whether TMI Unit 1 should be operated and, if so, under what conditions the restart would take place. Prior to start of the hearings, the NRC staff will conduct a review of technical information concerning the restart of Unit 1. As part of this review, the NRC staff will conduct meetings with the licensee in the presence of the public, and the public will be given the opportunity to raise questions and to make statements. During the hearing, the technical issues that are appropriate to assure the public health and safety will also be addressed. In addition, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board has indicated that NRC should consider the psychological impact of future operation on the nearby communities. A copy of the Commission Order that outlines the issues to be considered is also enclosed for your information.

Ms. Judith A. Krafsig

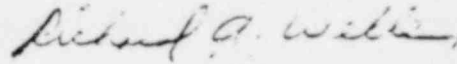
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As for Unit 2, the licensee has not yet submitted to the NRC a proposal for overall plant recovery, although the licensee is conducting feasibility studies. It is not possible at this time to determine when such proposals for recovery may be submitted or how much time will be needed for the required reviews and approvals in connection with Unit 2's recovery. I would note, however, that the licensee's authority to operate Unit 2, except for those actions necessary to keep the reactor shut down, was suspended by Order of July 20, 1979.

I appreciate your concerns and assure you that every effort is being made to ensure the continued protection of the health and safety of the public, not only at Three Mile Island, but also at all nuclear power plants.

Sincerely,



Bernard J. Snyder, Program Director  
Three Mile Island Program Office  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures: 1. Summary of NUREG-0558  
2. Order and Notice of Hearing  
of August 9, 1979

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224-4 Lafayette Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17109

April 9, 1979

President Jimmy Carter  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Mr. President:

As a resident of a Harrisburg, PA suburb located approximately seven miles from Three Mile Island, I am writing to express my concern and utter disgust at the ~~recent accident at this nuclear power plant~~

Harrisburg has been my home for 22 of the 23 years of my life. It was disheartening and frightening to me to feel such fear for my safety on the morning of March 30, 1979, that I left my home and traveled to Pittsburgh. Even more alarming was the fact that my parents, refusing to leave, remained in the area. Additionally, the fear of a complete meltdown or hydrogen explosion made me wonder whether or not I would ever see my family, friends, or home again.

The situation was unpleasant for many. Speaking for myself, the trauma I experienced surpassed no other in my lifetime. Conflicting news reports were anything but reassuring, and the obvious economic vs. human safety concerns of Metropolitan Edison were inexcusable.

The damage has been done. Economically, this place I have called home has been ruined. The constant and (oftentimes) dangerously high emissions of radioactive materials will eventually have a deleterious effect on the health of, among others, my generation. I do not feel that we should have to pay for the mistakes of a select few with our money or our lives and health. And Mr. President, where is the assurance that something like this or worse will not happen again in the future...?

I am a professional in the health planning field, and am currently employed by a Health Systems Agency. As such, I am fully aware of the long-term effects of low level radiation on the human body. Where, sir, is the governmental concern for the health of the people? Where are the medical exams that should be given free of charge to the people within a 20 mile radius of the plant (if not greater)? Why is there so much concern over who will pay for the electricity that Met Ed had to buy from other sources, rather than the welfare of area residents? It looks as though government officials think that Met Ed has suffered more than the residents of south central Pennsylvania!!


President Jimmy Carter  
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In closing, I appeal to you and everyone else concerned to close Three Mile Island PERMANENTLY!! This incident depicts so clearly how little even the so-called experts know about nuclear power. Our energies should be geared toward development of the use of less hazardous energy sources.

Mr. President, you serve as a voice for the people who elected you. I am one of many who wish to use you to make my voice heard. Please don't let myself or the residents of my home suffer in fear of another nuclear accident.

Thank you for your time to this most important matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Judith A. Krafzig". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Judith A. Krafzig