



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

11 Aug 80

Mr. Mark W. Bardell  
7 Crestview Village  
Middletown, Pennsylvania 17057

Dear Mr. Bardell:

Your letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Middletown about the release of radioactive gas from the Three Mile Island nuclear station and the revocation of Metropolitan Edison Company's operating license was referred to me for response.

With regard to your concern about the purging of the radioactive krypton gas from the reactor building of TMI Unit 2, Metropolitan Edison Company submitted to NRC a "Safety Analysis and Environmental Report" (November 13, 1979) in which it evaluated alternative methods for the disposal of the krypton gases, such as purging, cryogenic processing, and selective absorption. NRC also evaluated alternative methods for disposal of the krypton gas to determine what effect decontamination would have on workers, on public health and safety, and on the environment. Based on its evaluation, NRC issued an environmental assessment (NUREG-0662 and two addenda) for public comment on March 26, 1980, and received approximately 800 comments. These comments were considered in the staff's preparation of the "Final Environmental Assessment for Decontamination of the Three Mile Island Unit 2 Reactor Building Atmosphere" (NUREG-0662), vols. 1 and 2, copies of which are enclosed for your information.

From this process have emerged the following NRC staff conclusions:

- The potential physical health impact on the public of using any of the proposed strategies for removing the krypton-85 is negligible.
- The potential psychological impact is likely to grow the longer it takes to reach a decision, get started, and complete the process.
- The purging method is the quickest and the safest for the workers on Three Mile Island to accomplish.
- Overall, no significant environmental impact would result from use of any of the alternatives discussed in the assessment.

On June 12, 1980, the Commission issued an Order for Temporary Modification of License, authorizing controlled purging of the krypton-85 from the reactor building atmosphere. In a separate Memorandum and Order, also issued on June

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12, the Commission discussed rationale for its decision. Actual venting operations began on June 28, 1980, and were completed on July 11, 1980. Copies of both Commission issuances are also enclosed.

With regard to your comments about revoking Metropolitan Edison's license, the Commission has ordered that a public hearing be conducted to determine whether TMI-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 enclosed for your information.

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,

*h) Travers for*

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

- Enclosures:
1. NUREG-0662, vols. 1 & 2
  2. Order for Temporary Modification of License of June 12, 1980
  3. Memorandum and Order of June 12, 1980
  4. Order and Notice of Hearing of August 9, 1979

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
MIDDLETOWN OFFICE  
MIDDLETOWN, PA 17057

DEAR SIR,

I AM VERY UPSET ABOUT UNCONTROLLED RELEASES OF RADIOACTIVE GASES FROM THREE MILE ISLAND. NOT ONLY THE RELEASES OF THIS WEEK, (FEB 11-15) BUT EVER SINCE THE ACCIDENT,

I FEEL THAT MET-ED IS UNABLE TO RUN A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT. NOT ONLY MYSELF BUT THOUSANDS OF OTHER PEOPLE ARE FRIGHTENED ABOUT MET-ED'S ABILITY TO CLEAN UP T.M.I. I WANT THEIR LICENCE TAKEN FROM THEM. ALSO, I WANT THE PLANT CHANGED EITHER TO COAL OR GAS GENERATION.

SINCERELY,  
Mark W. Baidell

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