



Docket No. 50-320

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SECY (3) #80-0829

Mr. Robert M. Blaisdell  
30 Old Washington Road  
Ridgefield, Connecticut 06817

Dear Mr. Blaisdell:

I am writing in response to your letter of February 14, 1980, to Mr. Denton regarding your dissatisfaction with events occurring since the accident at Three Mile Island. I regret that this answer to your letter has been delayed. 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 to.

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.

You expressed concern that the NRC did not "penalize the operators of the plant." Enclosed is a copy of the Notice of Violation which was sent to Metropolitan Edison Company. The Notice discusses each violation for which a civil penalty was imposed.

We have taken a number of actions with respect to all nuclear power plants as a result of the Three Mile Island Incident. Specifically, full time inspectors have been assigned to each operating plant utilizing Babcock and Wilcox (B&W) pressurized water reactors like those at Three Mile Island. In addition, all these plants were shut down and the licensees of each plant were instructed to provide us with additional information about their facilities in light of the Three Mile Island incident. After review of the information provided, orders were issued to the licensees that required them to make immediate plant modifications, to provide additional operator training, and to reverse certain operating procedures. Additional long-term actions were ordered to further upgrade certain plant systems and operator training and procedures. All of these plants, except of course the Three Mile Island plant, have complied with the orders and have been permitted to resume operation.

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In addition, licensees of all operating plants utilizing pressurized water reactors have been instructed to take specific actions with regard to the status of certain equipment, plant procedures, operator actions, and facility designs. Licensees of all operating plants, including those utilizing boiling water reactors, have been instructed to provide us with additional information with regard to their facilities in light of the Three Mile Island incident.

We are currently reviewing the information provided. As soon as our review is complete, orders for modifications, as appropriate, will be issued to provide additional protection to the health and safety of the public.

In addition to the actions outlined above, as a result of TMI-2, studies were initiated in the areas of emergency preparedness, operator licensing reassessment, loss of feedwater event, small-break loss of coolant accidents, and lessons learned from the incident. In a number of areas work has progressed to the point where additional licensee requirements have been recommended. A number of these recommendations have been approved and efforts have begun to implement them.

Several human errors have been identified as contributing to the mishap at TMI-2. Accordingly, steps have been taken to address procedure changes necessary to assist the operator on both a short and long-term basis. Immediate changes were required at all Babcock and Wilcox facilities prior to their restart after the Commission ordered them shutdown. Also, the Lessons Learned and the Bulletins and Orders Task Forces have recommended design and operating requirements implemented in the near future on all facilities in operation or under construction. Longer-term modifications for all facilities are presently under consideration by the Lessons Learned Task Force.

The human errors experienced at TMI-2 stemmed in part from the incorrect interpretation of Reactor Coolant System instrumentation. Operator training had not previously addressed the system and operator response to the set of conditions experienced during the March 28, 1979, transient. As a result, all licensed operators at Babcock and Wilcox facilities received special training and a written examination on the transient. Additionally, these operators attended training sessions on the Babcock and Wilcox simulator to reinforce the operator response required during similar transient situations. All training was completed before operators could resume their duties during power operations. Long-term commitments on operator training and licensing are being developed by NRC's Operator Licensing Branch.

You commented on the lack of security at TMI. NRC's Office of Inspection and Enforcement conducted an investigation of allegations of a security breach as you mentioned. Upon completion of the investigation, a report was prepared. However, the report is considered proprietary and cannot be made public in accordance with Section 2.790 of the Commission's regulations.

Mr. Robert M. Blaisdell

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The Nuclear Regulatory Commission was established by Congress and given primary responsibility for licensing, inspection, and enforcement of regulations for nuclear power plants in the interest of public health and safety and for the protection of the environment. Changes in NRC's regulatory responsibilities can stem from the public's will and the resulting Congressional action. Therefore, I cannot comment on your suggestions that the NRC be abolished.

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 the Three Mile Island Station, but also at all nuclear power plants.

Sincerely,

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

Enclosure:  
Notice of Violation

OFFICE	TMIPD	TMIPD	DTB/TMIPD		
SURNAME	MDuncan/hmt	WO/lu	BJSnyder		
DATE	9/17/80	9/17/80	9/29/80		