

NRC PDR



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

OCT 10 1980

Mr. Roger Hansen
3107 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Dear Mr. Hansen:

Your postcard to Mr. Muller about the use of energy sources other than nuclear power was referred to me for response. I regret that this answer has been delayed. The accident at Three Mile Island 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.

There was a pause in the licensing of nuclear power plants from the time of the accident at TMI until February 29, 1980, so that recommendations of the Kemeny Commission and the NRC staff could be evaluated and those relevant to licensing could be implemented.

We have taken a number of actions with respect to all nuclear power plants as a result of the accident at Three Mile Island. Specifically, full-time inspectors have been assigned to each operating plant utilizing Babcock and Wilcox 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 accident. 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.

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 accident at Three Mile Island. 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

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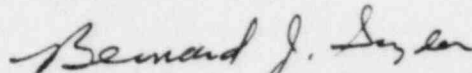
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learned from the accident. In a number of areas work has progressed to the point where additional licensee requirements have been recommended. A number of these recommendations have been approved and efforts have begun to implement them.

With respect to alternative methods of energy production, such as solar, wind, and geothermal, the Department of Energy is the federal agency responsible for their research and development. NRC considers these alternative methods of energy production in its assessment of the environmental impact of each nuclear power plant as part of the agency's overall review of each utility's application for a construction permit or an operating license. To date, we have determined that alternative methods of energy production are neither technically nor economically feasible to provide the required amount of power at the time it is needed.

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.

Sincerely,



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