

Local PDR



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

OCT 6 1980

Ms. Mary F. Thomas  
371 Lowther Street  
Lemoyne, Pennsylvania 17043

Dear Ms. Thomas:

Your letter to Mrs. Carter about your son's condition was referred to me for response.

A team of investigators from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare calculated the doses to the people living within 50 miles of the Three Mile Island site and estimated the number of new cancers that would result from the exposure to the radioactivity that leaked out of the plant. The team reported their work in a report entitled, "Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station" (NUREG-0558). They concluded that the offsite collective dose associated with radioactive material released from March 28, 1979, to April 7, 1979, represents minimal risks (that is, a very small number of additional health effects to the offsite population). Enclosed for your information is the summary of NUREG-0558.

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 Three Mile Island, the Center for Disease Control and the Pennsylvania Department 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.

Should you wish to claim health damages associated with your son's condition, we can provide the following information. The Federal District Court for the middle District of Pennsylvania has allowed the two insurance pools handling Three Mile Island accident claims to pay for evacuation costs and lost wages incurred by pregnant women, preschool-age children, and their families living within a 5-mile

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radius of the Three Mile Island plant. Those persons believing that they have incurred a legitimate expense as a result of the accident should submit their claims to the insurance pools. Payment of the claims will then depend on the decision made by the court. The claims should be submitted to the following address:

American Nuclear Insurers  
ATTN: Mr. William Carrier  
The Exchange, Suite 245  
270 Farmington Avenue  
Farmington, Connecticut 06032

In addition, I am enclosing for your information a news release from the Pennsylvania Department of Health regarding infant mortality in the area as a result of the accident at TMI.

With regard to your desire for the permanent shutdown of TMI, 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 is conducting a review of technical information concerning the restart of Unit 1. As part of this review, the NRC staff has been conducting meetings with the licensee in the presence of the public, and the public was 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. The hearing is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m., October 15, 1980, at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission Hearing Room, 25 North Court Street (ground floor), Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

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.

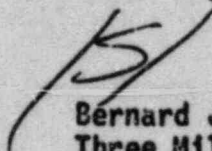
Ms. Mary F. Thomas

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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. News release
  3. Order and Notice of Hearing  
of August 9, 1979