

TERA

Mr. Bernard Wolf
Beaver Run, RD #1
Glenmoore, Pennsylvania 19343

OCT 24 1980

Dear Mr. Wolf:

Your letter to Mr. Denton about the release of krypton-85 from the Three Mile Island nuclear station was referred to me for response.

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 and 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 the 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 12, 1980, the Commission discussed rationale for its decision. Actual purging operations began on June 28, 1980, and were completed on July 11, 1980. The

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OCT 24 1980

doses resulting from the purge were well within those predicted in section 7.1 of volume 1 of NRC's final environmental assessment. Copies of both Commission issuances are also enclosed.

The NRC staff has made a preliminary review of the findings presented in the report titled "Radiation Exposure Due to Venting TMI-2 Reactor Building Atmosphere," submitted by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, dated June 12, 1980. Enclosed for your information is a copy of this review.

NRC has also prepared a programmatic environmental impact statement (PEIS) for public comment on the decontamination and disposal of radioactive wastes resulting from the accident at Three Mile Island Unit 2. The PEIS, a copy of which is enclosed for your information, focuses on the environmental issues and alternative methods associated with the performance of these cleanup activities.

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,

BSI

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. Staff review
 5. PEIS

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