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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

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Ms. Kate Tilson  
4 Marshall Road  
Hamden, Connecticut 06517

Dear Ms. Tilson:

Your telegram to President Carter 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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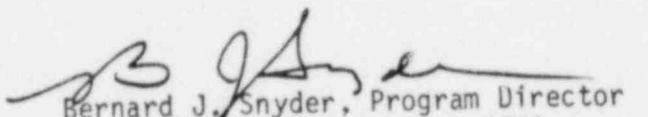
Ms. Kate Tilson

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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.

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. NUREG-0662, vols. 1 & 2
  2. Order for Temporary Modification of License of June 12, 1980
  3. Memorandum and Order of June 12, 1980

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PMS PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER  
WHITE HOUSE DC  
MADNESS TO ALLOW GAS RELEASE FROM 3 MILE ISLAND NO ONE KNOWS WHAT  
DANGERS EXIST  
KATE TILSON  
4 MARSHALL RD  
HAMDEN CT 06517  
NNNN