

Pennsylvania Voice of Energy

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Mr. John F. Ahearne
Chairman Commissioner
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
1717 H. Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20555



SUBJECT: Docket 50-289SP
TMI Unit 1 Middletown, PA

The Pennsylvania Voice of Energy is a group of citizens concerned about the effects which a lack of energy will have on our families, our society and our way of life. Some of our members live in the area served by the Three Mile Island Plant. We advocate conservation, the utilization of all established energy sources and the development of alternative energy sources consistent with the technical economic supply and environmental limitations of each.

Currently, the restarting of Unit 1 at Three Mile Island has been forbidden pending extensive public hearings which are expected to take at least a year and a half. However, the Kemeny Commission Report on the accident at Three Mile Island has been made public and for all the agonizing that we have gone through, what did it say? Among other things, it said that:

1. "The Fundamental cause of the accident was operator error" (See page 10) and
2. "The most serious health effect of the accident was severe mental stress which was short lived." (See page 13)

Furthermore, it also stated that:

"On the bases of present scientific knowledge, the radiation doses received by the general population as a result of the accident were so small that there will be no detectable, additional cases of cancer, developmental abnormalities or general health consequences of the accident at Three Mile Island."

In effect, although a very serious accident occurred and many mistakes took place, nobody was hurt. Other B & W reactors in nuclear power plants of similar vintage and design as well as the other operating plants are permitted to operate all over the country.

These plants are being, or will be modified with appropriate technical fixes learned from TMI-2 to make them even safer. Why then do we have to wait for 1 1/2 years of public hearings to restart TMI-1 if short-term "Lessons Learned" fixes are implemented as required by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission prior to restart?

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There is nothing to be gained by political delay by those who have learned to "USE" the system. In fact, with the starting of TMI 1, there is a distinct economic advantage to those customers of Metropolitan Edison Co. who can effect a savings in their monthly electric bills. As with the Titanic, those with the most to lose are below the waterline. These are the poor and those on fixed incomes. For them, the additional costs, without TMI-1, imposes a severe mental stress in an attempt to meet their electric supply expenses.

Chauncy Starr, Vice Chairman of the Electric Power Research Institute, puts it very well when he tells us that "What is needed is a broader perspective that recognizes that political and social risks often outweigh perceived technological risk and its uncertainty. Thus in the case of energy, supply malnutrition may be a more serious risk than the small uncertainties of our existing energy diet." TMI is a case in point. It is simply unconscionable that we are now suppressing the use of one of America's two most abundant resources (coal and nuclear energy) at a time when oil pricing is out of control and our energy supply is vulnerable to foreign influences.

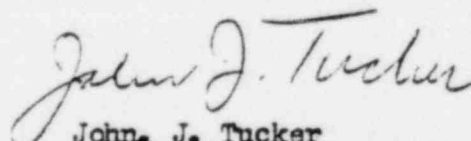
Energy is used for the basic necessities of life. It puts food in our stomachs, provides jobs for our people, provides opportunity for our children and hope for those who want to improve their position in life. Survival demands that we shift from an oil economy to the use of other fuels and for the first time in our history, we do not have 50 or 60 years for a leisurely shift.

Today we import almost half of our requirements or approximately 9 million barrels of oil every day. Electricity through the use of uranium and coal can conserve non-renewable resources such as oil for special applications. The 636 million barrels of oil burned in 1978 to make electricity could have been converted into 16 million gallons of gasoline. That would be enough for 23 million average cars for one entire year.

Our quality of life with an over-increasing number of people and a decreasing availability of non-renewable resources demands a policy of "choice by inclusion" and not a "choice by exclusion and elimination." This is a compelling reason for including nuclear energy in our overall energy mix.

Finally, we would like to demonstrate to this board that there is a constituency for a balanced National energy policy, rather than the appearance of a tendency toward negativism. All there appears to be are spokesmen against things and what is left is thoroughly anemic-too little, too late.

Let us act now in a rational, educated manner for the continued improvement of our energy supply. A good place to begin is with the restart of TMI-1.


John J. Tucker
President