

1/26/81

SECRET NUMBER

PROD. & UTIL. FAC.

50-289

Dear Ms. Market:

This is in response to your letter of December 10, 1980 to Chairman Ahearne. In your correspondence, you commented upon the activities involving the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station with emphasis on the delay in restart of Unit 1 while similar nuclear facilities are operating.

Unit 1 is shutdown in accordance with an Order of July 2, 1979, by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which stated:

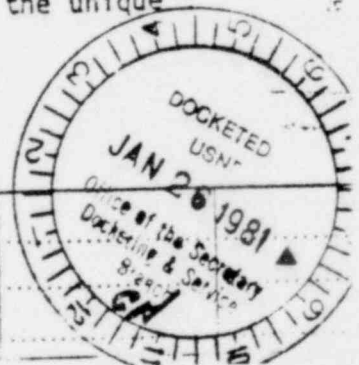
"In view of the variety of issues raised by the accident at the Three Mile Island Unit No. 2 facility, the Commission presently lacks the requisite reasonable assurance that the same licensee's Three Mile Island Unit No. 1 facility, a nuclear power reactor of similar design, can be operated without endangering the health and safety of the public. Accordingly, we direct that the Unit No. 1 facility, presently in a shutdown condition, shall remain shutdown until further order of the Commission itself. The Commission has further determined that it is in the public interest that a hearing precede restart of the facility."

The Commission's Order and Notice of Hearing on August 9, 1979, stated:

"In addition to the items identified for the other B&W reactors, the unique circumstances at Three Mile Island require that additional safety concerns identified by the NRC staff be resolved prior to restart. These concerns result from: (1) potential interaction between Unit 1 and the damaged Unit 2, (2) questions about the management capabilities and technical resources of Metropolitan Edison, including the impact of the Unit 2 accident on these, (3) the potential effect of operations necessary to decontaminate the Unit 2 facility on Unit 1 and (4) recognized deficiencies in emergency plans and station operating procedures."

The hearing conducted by an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB) of the NRC, commenced on October 15, 1980 and is ongoing. The record on which the Commission will make a decision on resumption of operation of Three Mile Island Unit 1 will include a recommendation from the ASLB. Because of the unique

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nature of the Three Mile Island Unit 1 restart proceeding and the broad spectrum of issues under discussion, it is difficult to provide a definitive schedule at this time. Our best estimate is that the Hearing will be completed in mid 1981.

Your comments and interest in this matter are appreciated.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor
Regulation

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