

50-299

Subject: Comments offered for the hearing at the Wm. Penn Museum

To: The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board

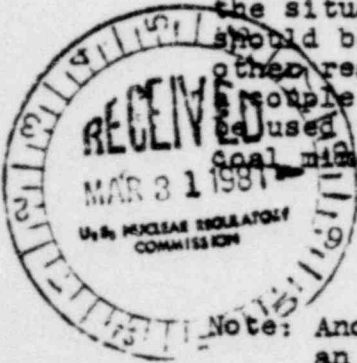
Prepared March 10, 1981.

It would be helpful to all of us if the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board would bring us up to date on statistics associated with generating electric power. No doubt you are familiar with the statistics used in the WASH-1400 report sometimes called the Rasmussen report. Are their statements about the number of deaths per year, associated with our daily lives correct, after 5 years exposure to public perusal? Are the statements about risks associated with generating electrical power essentially correct?

Petr Beckmann, in "The Health hazards of Not Going Nuclear", gives the deaths in fatal mining accidents for coal and uranium. Per billion megawatt hours generated from coal 190 coal miners die; for uranium it is 18. Does the board believe this 10 to 1 ratio is creditable? If you do, how can you make any other decision than to turn TMI 1 back on? Anti-nuclear people imply that one consumers life is worth more than 171 coal miners lives. That must be why they think coal should be used rather than radioactive fuels. I am aware that the output of TMI-1 is somewhat less than 1000 megawatts, but the 10 to 1 ratio holds for any amount of power consumed.

If you have not read Aaron Wildavsky's article, "Zero Risk Is The Highest Risk Of All", in the January-February 1979 American Scientist, may I suggest that you do. Among other things, he points out that putting too much effort on one risk associated with our lives often becomes severely counter-productive. When we get too intent on reducing one risk, another risk becomes dominant and kills us. Attempting to reduce all risks to zero is not a physically realizable objective. Too much effort on reducing one risk toward zero, such as radioactive nucleii, diverts our attention from risk reduction in other areas, such as toxic chemical disposal.

Please bring us up to date on the present state of knowledge in the situations mentioned here. My reading leads me to believe TMI-1 should be back on as soon as it is at the state-of-the-art for other reactors. I see no reason why that should be any more than a couple of months. The exaggerated fears of consumers should not be used to justify and be exchanged for the unnecessary deaths of coal miners.



Henry H. Grimm, retired physicist and electronics engineer.

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Note: Another evidence of Wildavsky's contention is discussed in an article by Henry Hurwitz' article, "Are energy-efficient homes more radioactive than nuclear meltdowns". This discusses the high radon level in homes with inadequate air exchanges.

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