

TERA

OCT 6 1980

Mr. E. Mikofalvy
142 Brunswick Drive
Avon Lake, Ohio 44012

Dear Mr. Mikofalvy:

I am writing in response to your letter to President Carter regarding nuclear power plant safety. I regret that this answer to your letter has been delayed. The accident at the Three Mile Island reactor and its consequences have created a substantial increase in the Commission's workload, which has prevented me from responding to you as promptly as I would have liked.

With regard to your first suggestion, building another structure around the existing TMI-2 reactor is a viable technology (called "entombment") that has been considered for the TMI-2 plant. Entombment is insufficient because the reactor's fuel and the heat it is generating (approximately 115 kilowatts) must be removed for safe plant decommissioning. The fuel must be removed from the reactor vessel, put in a safe configuration, and either stored at Three Mile Island or shipped offsite for disposal. These safeguards and procedures are established by NRC regulations, which serve to assure the public health and safety. These matters will be subject to public review during the Environmental Impact Statement studies required by law (the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Public Law 91-190), which are now being conducted by the Commission.

As to news coverage about Three Mile Island, information about the accident made available to the public was confusing for a number of reasons. Some problems were attributable to the sources of information, some to the way in which information was made available to the press, and some to how the press reported the information it obtained. NRC's information was not always complete nor, in some instances, wholly accurate.

We recognize the importance of making complete and accurate information available to the public. Consequently, we have made specific plans for providing information to the public for such potentially serious accidents as occurred at Three Mile Island. These plans include making the availability of public information part of NRC's and the utilities' emergency response planning. Under this policy, the utilities must provide offsite locations for newscenters. We also plan to appoint a senior NRC official responsible for coordinating NRC information activities during an emergency. By centralizing the gathering and dissemination of NRC's information, we will provide the public with relevant and timely information.

OFFICE >					
SURNAME >					
DATE >	8 010280	638			

Mr. E. Mikofalvy

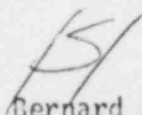
- 2 -

In answer to your third question about precautions your family can take in a nuclear emergency, designated state or local government officials will provide you with clear instructions on the best course of action. If evacuation is necessary, you will be told what to do and where to go. In some situations shelter will be preferable to evacuation, and you will be informed accordingly.

The NRC has undertaken extensive efforts to improve licensee emergency preparedness at all operating power reactors and at those reactors scheduled for an operating license decision within the next year. Meetings were held at our regional offices to discuss the recent impacts of emergency planning and current regulations. In addition, a team of NRC Emergency Planning Task Force members have visited every operating reactor site in the country to upgrade emergency preparedness. This effort has been closely coordinated with a similar effort by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to upgrade state and local response plans. In addition, NRC's Office of Inspection and Enforcement, in conjunction with the Emergency Preparedness Program Office, will initiate a site visit program in the future to verify proper implementation of licensee emergency preparedness 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,



Bernard J. Snyder, Program Director
Three Mile Island Program Office
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

DISTRIBUTION

Docket 50-289

PDR

LPDR

TERA

NRR r/f

TMI PO r/f

TMI Site r/f

BSnyder

JCollins

DBrinkman

Woliu

OFFICE ▶	TMI TF <i>Woliu</i>	TMI TF <i>DBrinkman</i>	TMI PO <i>BSnyder</i>			
SURNAME ▶	Woliu	DBrinkman	BSnyder			
DATE ▶	9/30/80	10/2/80	10/3			