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4567 Cherryland Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15214

December 10, 1980

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

Dear Mr. Ahearne:

The public's concern over the safety of nuclear generating stations is understandable, particularly, following the incident at Unit #2 at Three Mile Island. However, in an energy short society, I find it to be a contradiction that society permits Unit #1, which was neither damaged nor involved in the incident, to remain idle.

In the past several months, the news media has highlighted numerous nuclear power stations which have been required by your Commission to make structural and operational modifications. However, unlike Unit #1 at Three Mile Island which has remained shut down, these units have been able to make modifications while remaining in service.

Although for Pennsylvania as a whole the reserve generating capacity appears adequate through the decade of the 80s, such an overview masks potential problems in some areas of the state. Southcentral Pennsylvania, for example, currently is deficient in generating capacity due to the continued shut down of Units 1 and 2 at Three Mile Island. In addition, in southwestern Pennsylvania, reserve capacity will fall below required levels in the early to mid 1980s. I believe that it is important to note that most utility industry projections assume the continuing availability of all generating fuels, including oil, coal and uranium. In this age of environmental concern and the Mid-East situation, we may also find our coal and oil options reduced and thus shorten the period of adequate generating capacity for the residents of Pennsylvania.

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According to a study by the Committee on Nuclear and Alternative Energy Systems of the National Research Council, "In terms of public risks from routine operation of electric power plants (including fuel production and delivery), coal-fired generation presents the highest overall level of risk, with oil-fired and nuclear generation considerably safer, and natural gas the safest."

Two weeks after the Three Mile Island incident, President Carter established a Presidential Commission with twelve members to conduct a comprehensive study and investigation of the incident at TMI. According to the Committee's report, "Our findings do not, standing alone, require the conclusion that nuclear power is inherently too dangerous to permit it to continue and expand as a form of power generation."

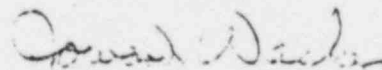
Nuclear power currently supplies the equivalent energy of one million barrels of oil per day. Yet this is only about 13 percent of our total electrical needs. This puts the U. S. fifth in the world in the percentage of nuclear generation. If we are to maintain a competitive and independent position in the world economy and reduce our dependence on foreign suppliers, we must maintain the nuclear option. According to a recent release by the Atomic Industrial Forum, in the past eighteen months, nuclear power plant operating capacity outside the United States increased approximately twenty-five percent.

The last few years are indicative of the crucial role played by nuclear power. With fossil fuels in short supply and severe winter conditions and labor trouble preventing coal delivery, utilities across the country turned to reliable nuclear plants for much-needed power without any major disruptions in the economy.

An adequate energy supply is needed in Pennsylvania and the nation in order to keep business and industry going and to provide the jobs and products needed to sustain our society. I am convinced that a future with severe electric energy shortages is far more threatening to our society than the continued careful development of the nation's nuclear potential.

As a concerned resident of the State of Pennsylvania, I believe the Commission has the obligation of returning Unit #1 to service in order that the setting of a dangerous precedent of keeping an operable nuclear unit out of service can be avoided.

Sincerely,



Howard Wacker