Central file

AUG 10 1982

The Honorable Bill Goodling
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Goodling:

This letter is in response to an inquiry, dated July 9, 1982, from one of your constituents, Mrs. L. G. Parsons, requesting information about the cancer rate in Pennsylvania, the processed Three Mile Island Unit 2 (TMI-2) accident related water, and the periodic venting of the reactor building of TMI-2.

Specifically, Mrs. Parsons asks what the NRC has done with cancer rate data indicating that the State of Pennsylvania has one of the highest cancer rates in the nation. The NRC is aware that the cancer death rate for the State of Pennsylvania (208 deaths per year per 100,000) is somewhat higher than the estimated U.S. rate of 180 deaths per year per 100,000 people. This by itself is not unusual since the risk of developing a fatal cancer is subject to large variations depending on geographic and demographic factors. For example, the variations among states range from an annual rate of about 70 deaths per 100,000 population in Alaska, to roughly 160 in Virginia, to about 250 deaths in Rhode Island. The observed cancer death rates and variations thereof are not attributable to the operation of commercial nuclear power facilities, based on actual measurements of releases of radioactivity. With regard to Pennsylvania in particular, extensive studies of the releases of radioactivity during the TMI-2 accident have been performed. Briefly, the population within 50 miles of the TMI site received an estimated dose of 3,300 person-rem. This population dose is expected to result in less than one additional fatal cancer among the exposed population, within a time frame in which over 100,000 fatal cancers can be expected to occur (within the same population) as a result of other causes.

With regard to the processed accident related water at TMI-2, the licensee is prohibited from disposing of the water. To date, approximately 1.5 million gallons of accident related water have been processed onsite and placed in storage. None of the processed water has been discharged to the Susquehanna River or disposed of by any other alternative method. The licensee has not yet proposed any method for disposition of the processed water and any future proposals will require approval by the Commission. The licensee is, however, releasing to the Susquehanna River non-accident related water that has trace quantities of radioactivity; this discharge is essentially industrial water that is well within the existing technical specifications for allowable releases.

Regarding the periodic venting of the reactor building, the licensee issues a press release seventy-two hours before any planned venting cycle, specifying

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DATE ▶						

details of the start of the venting cycle and its duration and the expected amount of radioactivity to be released. These ventings are necessary to minimize the concentrations of airborne radionuclides in the reactor building during entries for work in the building. The vented atmosphere is filtered and monitored prior to release to the environment and a typical venting releases less than 5 curies of Kr-85.

I trust that this response provides the information requested by your constituent.

Sincerely,

(Signed) T. A. Rehm

for William J. Dircks
Executive Director
for Operations

Distribution:
DCS
Docket 50-320
PDR
LPDR
EDO R/F
TMIPO R/F
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SHanauer
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LBarrett
OLynch
RWeller
WTravers
SCavanaugh
MBridgers (EDO-12153)
LBarrett
SECY-82-0772 (3)
OCA

REVISED IN OEDO - SEE PREVIOUS ORC FOR CONCURRENCES

OFFICE	TMIPO:NRR	TMIPO:NRR	NRR	NRR	EDO	OCA	
SURNAME	RWeller	BJSnyder	EGCase	HRDenton	WJDircks		
DATE	8/2/82	8/2/82	8/4/82	8/4/82	8/9/82	8/10/82	

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United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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This letter is in response to an inquiry, dated July 9, 1982, from one of your constituents, Mrs. L. G. Parsons, requesting information about the cancer rate in Pennsylvania, the processed Three Mile Island Unit 2 (TMI-2) accident related water, and the periodic venting of the reactor building of TMI-2.

Specifically, Mrs. Parsons asks what the NRC has done with the cancer rate data for the State of Pennsylvania. The NRC is aware that the cancer death rate for the State of Pennsylvania (208 deaths per year per 100,000 people) is somewhat higher than the estimated U.S. rate of 180 deaths per year per 100,000 people, however, cancer death rates vary considerably from state-to-state and are not perturbed by the operation of commercial nuclear power facilities. This is because the estimated cancer rate to occupational workers and the offsite public resulting from the operation of a nuclear power plant is negligible compared to the cancer rate normally expected in a given population. As such, the NRC does not have a formalized program to evaluate the cancer rate data for Pennsylvania or any other state.

With regard to the processed accident related water at TMI-2, the licensee is prohibited from disposing of the water. To date, approximately 1.5 million gallons of accident related water have been processed onsite and placed in storage. None of the processed water has been discharged to the Susquehanna River or disposed of by any other alternative method. The licensee has not yet proposed any method for disposition of the processed water and any future proposals will require approval by the Commission.

Regarding the periodic venting of the reactor building, the licensee issues a press release seventy-two hours before any planned venting cycle, specifying details of the start of the venting cycle and its duration and the expected amount of radioactivity to be released. These ventings are necessary to

minimize the concentrations of airborne radionuclides in the reactor building during entries for work in the building. The vented atmosphere is filtered and monitored prior to release to the environment and a typical venting releases less than 5 curies of Kr-85.

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William J. Dircks, Executive Director
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OFFICE	TMIPO:NRR	TMIPO:NRR	NRR	NRR	EDO		
SURNAME	RWeller:cap	BJSnyder	EGCase	HRDenton			
DATE	8/2/82	8/2/82	8/ /82	8/ /82	8/ /82		

No. 0772 Logging Date 7/27/82

NRC SECRETARIAT

TO:
- ☐ Commissioner ____ Date ____
- ☒ Exec. Dir./Oper.
- ☐ Cong. Liaison
- ☐ Public Affairs
- ☐ ____
- ☐ Gen. Counsel
- ☐ Solicitor
- ☐ Secretary
- ☐ Inspector & Auditor
- ☐ Policy Evaluation

Incoming: Rep Bill Goodling
From: ____

To: NRC Date 7/15/82
Subject: questions concerning TMI

☐ Prepare reply for signature of:
- ☐ Chairman
- ☐ Commissioner ____
- ☐ EDO, GC, CL, SOL, PA, SECY, IA, PE
- ☐ Signature block omitted
- ☐ ____
- ☐ Return original of incoming with response

☒ For direct reply* Suspense: Aug 5
☐ For appropriate action
☐ For information

Rec'd Off. EDO
Date 7-28-82
Time 2:00 p

Remarks: OCA to Ack, make docket

For the Commission: bac

*Send three (3) copies of reply to Secy Correspondence and Records Branch

NRC FORM 62A (3-82) ACTION SLIP