

September 8, 1982

Docket No. 50-320

Mr. Robert C. Arnold, President
General Public Utilities Nuclear Corporation
100 Interpace Parkway
Parsippany, NJ 07054

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Dear Mr. Arnold:

In accordance with its responsibility to protect public health, safety and the environment, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), through its staff, has been providing close regulatory oversight during cleanup activities at Three Mile Island Unit 2 (TMI-2). Although the cleanup began shortly after the accident, the activities completed to date represent only limited progress toward total plant cleanup. A great deal of difficult work remains to be done.

Containers of highly radioactive ion exchange materials from EPICOR-II system processing and from submerged demineralizer system (SDS) processing, remain on-site pending efforts necessary to make them safe for shipment. More of this kind of waste will be produced as additional water from the reactor building basement and the reactor coolant system is decontaminated using SDS and EPICOR-II. Removal of the reactor vessel head for examination and subsequent removal of the vessel internals and the fuel have yet to be accomplished. Only limited planning, engineering and preparations have been initiated to carry out this task. Highly radioactive demineralizer resins from the reactor coolant purification system, in place since the accident, must also be removed and shipped off the site. The balance of the most contaminated floors and surfaces in the auxiliary building remains to be cleaned up, and the entire reactor building will have to undergo further extensive decontamination. Following defueling, the reactor coolant system surfaces will require decontamination. Finally, all fuel assemblies, packaged core debris, vessel internals and related radioactive wastes will require shipment off site for research and/or disposal. It is clear that this remaining work represents the majority of the total cleanup project and will require a significant effort to complete.

In the past, the NRC has clearly stated its intent that the licensee expedite the cleanup (Statement of Policy, April 28, 1981) and, as the Director of the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, I ordered that specific action be initiated to decontaminate radioactive water from the reactor building basement and the reactor coolant system (Order, June 18, 1981). I remain concerned that cleanup delays, if they are permitted to continue, will increase the likelihood of incidents involving radiation leakage and the possible exposures of workers and the public.

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Mr. Robert C. Arnold

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In order to determine more precisely the state of planning and schedules for some major TMI-2 cleanup tasks, the licensee is requested to submit the following information, on the dates indicated, pursuant to section 182 of the Atomic Energy Act and 10 CFR 50.54(f) of the Commission's regulations:

1. Implementation schedules for completing the removal of EPICOR-II prefilter and submerged demineralizer system ion exchange wastes from the TMI-2 site are requested to be submitted before October 3, 1982.
2. An implementation schedule for all major activities required to facilitate defueling the reactor core, including reactor vessel head removal, is requested to be submitted before November 8, 1982. Major activities should, include, among others, design of any special water cleanup system(s), and fuel and debris removal equipment, as well as suitable containers. The licensee should include a schedule for submitting preliminary as well as detailed technical information on these activities to the NRC.
3. An implementation schedule for activities required to facilitate the removal of the reactor coolant purification system ion exchange wastes from the TMI-2 site is requested to be submitted before October 8, 1982. This schedule should include the licensee's schedule for completing characterization studies and conceptualized and final planning for removal and shipment of these wastes.

In accordance with the concerns expressed above, the schedular information requested should be based on an expedited cleanup pace, unencumbered by financial constraints. The near-term dates for receipt of this information reflect the NRC's perception of the need for prompt action given the long lead times associated with ultimate completion of these activities.

This information is required in order to determine whether the Commission should take any additional steps to assure that cleanup tasks are completed expeditiously.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By
B. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: J. Barton
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