



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

January 14, 1991

The Honorable Richard Schulze
Member, United States
House of Representatives
10 South Leopard Road
Suite 204
Paoli, Pennsylvania 19301

Dear Congressman Schulze:

This is in response to your letter of December 4, 1990, in which you forwarded a letter from one of your constituents, Mr. Russo, expressing his concerns regarding evaporation of TMI-2 accident generated water (AGW).

The NRC, contrary to Mr. Russo's assertion, believes that a substantial amount of public information has been made available concerning the health and environmental effects of AGW evaporation at TMI. In addition, we believe the public has had ample opportunity to participate in our review process concerning this matter. Outlined below is a summary of the major NRC activities which occurred over the last four years on this issue.

The NRC began an environmental impact review of the proposed evaporation in July of 1986. In December of 1986, the NRC staff published a draft environmental impact statement, NUREG-0683, Supplement 2, which dealt with the disposal of AGW. The final report of this environmental impact statement was published in June of 1987. Both documents were made available to the public free of charge. The NRC issued press releases; copies are enclosed for your information. A copy of the final report, which was placed in the NRC Public Document Room, is attached.

The AGW evaporation process was then subjected to the NRC staff technical review process. Further, a notice for opportunity of public hearing was published in the FEDERAL REGISTER on July 31, 1987. Following a period of discovery and pre-hearing motions, a public hearing was held in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in November, 1988. This hearing also received a great deal of attention in both the electronic and print media.

In February 1989, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB), in its order, approved TMI-2 AGW evaporation. This was based on the board's detailed and unanimous finding that AGW evaporation is environmentally acceptable and can be conducted without endangering the health and safety of the public. The ASLB final initial decision is included for your information. This recommendation was appealed to and affirmed by the Atomic Safety and Licensing Appeal Board;

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this hearing was open to the public. The NRC Commissioners approved the AGW evaporation in April 1989 and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources issued a permit to allow AGW evaporation in August 1989. At the conclusion of the process described above, the NRC published a safety evaluation, addressing the disposal of the accident generated water, on September 11, 1989.

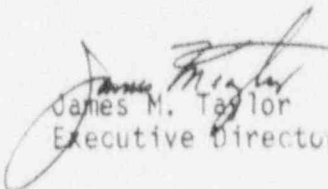
Following the TMI-2 accident, a TMI-2 Advisory Panel was established to publicly discuss engineering, environmental, and safety issues. For each meeting, the NRC has issued a press release and has listed a meeting notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER to solicit public involvement. There have been 19 TMI-2 Advisory Panel meetings held since October 1986, several of which discussed AGW evaporation. The next Panel meeting is scheduled for January 15, 1991 at the Holiday Inn in downtown Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The Columbia University study, that was mentioned in Mr. Russo's letter, researched the possible increase in cancer rate due to the TMI-2 accident and concluded that there is no relation between radiation vented during the TMI-2 accident and cancer rates among children living nearby. This study did not pertain to the evaporation of accident generated water. However, the Commonwealth and the NRC reviewed this document to ensure that no new information had been uncovered that could directly change the conclusions documented in NUREG 0683 Supplement 2. Neither the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania nor the NRC found any reason to require the utility to change the AGW evaporation process.

The review process for the disposal of TMI-2 AGW has taken more than four years to complete and included an environmental evaluation, a safety evaluation, and frequent TMI-2 Advisory Panel meetings. All documents were and continue to be available to the public and all hearings were open to the public. Further, the NRC staff is aware of the actions taken by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and by the utility, General Public Utilities, to keep the public apprised of the evaporation plan.

I hope that we have been responsive to the concerns raised by Mr. Russo. If you or Mr. Russo have further questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,


James M. Taylor
Executive Director for Operations

Enclosures: As stated