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COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

March 23, 1983

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Honorable Nunzio J. Palladino
 Chairman,
 U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
 1717 H Street, N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I received yesterday your response to my January 21, 1983 letter regarding issues related to steam generator tube degradation and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation's December 13, 1982 hearing. While it will take me some time to fully evaluate your response, there is one matter so compelling that I would like to be provided with some additional information as soon as possible.

In my letter, I referred to a September 19, 1982 memorandum from the then-Chairman of the NRC's Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards (ACRS) Paul Shewmon. In that memo, Dr. Shewmon suggested that given the widespread tube degradation and repairs in both steam generators (SGs) at Three Mile Island Unit 1 (TMI-1), a simultaneous rupture in each of the SGs at that plant "isn't an incredible event."

I asked you whether such an incident could lead to a sequence not encompassed by emergency procedures and whether this issue would be resolved before any restart of the plant. Your response was: "Yes, a tube rupture in both SG's of a two SG plant could lead to a sequence not encompassed by the emergency procedures." And, you went on to note that while this issue was being considered under the TMI Action Plan (Item I.C.1), "(t)he Commission does not consider the implementation of this action plan item to be necessary before the restart of TMI-1."

I am deeply troubled by the implication of your response. It leads me to think that the Commission is not doing everything possible to resolve serious outstanding safety issues before restart. I would therefore appreciate a prompt response to the following questions.

1. Could a tube rupture in both SGs of a two SG plant such as TMI-1 result in core damage?

Honorable Nunzio J. Palladino

March 23, 1983

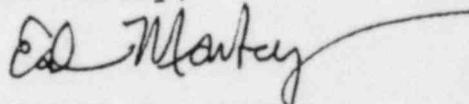
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2. Does the NRC agree with Dr. Shewmon that a tube rupture in both SGs at TMI-1 at the same time is a credible event?
3. What analysis has the NRC or the ACRS done to evaluate the probability or consequences of this risk at TMI-1 and what were the results?
4. Why has the NRC decided not to require consideration or resolution of this issue before restart?
5. What accidents within the design basis for TMI-1, but outside the scope of the restart hearings, will not be resolved before restart?

Additionally, I would like to remind you and Mr. Harold Denton of your promise at the ^{Feb 22} ~~March 2~~, 1983 Energy and Environment Subcommittee hearing to provide me with an update of the exact status of the 347 steps in the TMI Action Plan. I request that I be provided with this information--including a specific answer to my question of how many of the 347 steps are yet to be fully completed--by March 28, 1983 at the latest.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,



EDWARD J. MARKEY
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Oversight and Investigations

done on 3/25/83 by
Fred Combs

EJM:rau