November 1, 1984

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

BEFORE THE ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING BOARD

In the Matter of	)	
	)	
METROPOLITAN EDISON COMPANY	)	Docket No. 50-289 SP
	)	(Restart-Management Remand)
(Three Mile Island Nuclear Station, Unit No. 1)	)	

TESTIMONY OF THOMAS LEROY VAN WITBECK

My name is Thomas Leroy Van Witbeck. I currently hold the position of Corporate Vice President Plant Services Group for Energy Incorporated. The Plant Services Group provides consulting services and management information systems to the utility industry, primarily to the nuclear utility companies. The consulting services are provided in the areas of plant startup, operation and maintenance. The management information systems are designed to support operation and maintenance of capital intensive facilities such as nuclear power plants.

My background encompasses 25 years of association with the nuclear industry, of which seven years were in the U.S. Navy Nuclear Program, four years in facility operation, 10 years in plant startup and operations consulting, and the past four years in the management of a consulting business.

I hold a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nuclear Engineering from Oregon State University. I am a member of the American Nuclear Society, a registered Professional Engineer, and have held a reactor operator's license.

On March 30, 1979, Energy Incorporated was requested to provide assistance to GPU at Three Mile Island. I arrived at the TMI visitors center at approximately 8:00 AM on March 31, 1979, with a crew of six EI employees. The resumes of the EI personnel and a letter of introduction were presented to GPU. By 2:00 PM all personnel were checked in and had received assignments.

My initial assignment was to participate in the preparation of a sequence of events. After several weeks I was placed in charge of the group developing the sequence of events. This group grew in charter and number to become the Accident Assessment Group (AAG), having about 15 members at the peak of activity. The AAG prepared in excess of a dozen technical data reports covering events surrounding the accident. To prepare these reports the AAG reviewed plant records and interviewed plant staff and drew upon their experience and knowledge. As a leader of this group I reviewed all reports which I personally did not prepare.

As a result of the review of records and discussions with the TMI staff the AAG became aware of the pressure spike on

March 31, 1979. My appreciation for the significance of the pressure spike as a measure of core damage however was not gained until I was exposed to calculations of the volume of H2 involved which was somewhere in the period April 2nd through April 4th.

As head of the AAG, I was involved in several sessions with the GPU management regarding the development of a sequence of events during the period April 6, 1979 through May 1, 1979. Herman Dieckamp was present at each of these review sessions and asked questions regarding the sequence which were indicative of his desire to have a detailed knowledge of the accident and events surrounding the accident.

During the early days of the accident I also saw Herman Dieckamp in the trailer city and the dining tent periodically. At these chance meetings we would discuss some technical point or Mr. Dieckamp would ask questions regarding the AAG work progress which indicated a knowledge of the technical aspects of the investigation.

On September 15, 1979, I made the last formal presentation to Mr. Dieckamp and Mr. Arnold that I recall making. At this meeting I covered three topics:

Initiating events of the accident,

HPI/MU performance, and

Operator actions during the first 72 hours following the accident.

These topics and their technical content are typical of the detailed technical knowledge Mr. Dieckamp required and over which he maintained cognizance.