

March 5, 1981 -- Statement to the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board concerning the restart of TMI Unit 1:

First, I want to thank you for the opportunity given me and others to voice opinions on this vital issue. And I'll be quick to the point. As a family man with three young sons who lives only six miles from and in sight of TMI, I am firmly against the restart of any TMI reactor now or at any time in the future.

Let me add that prior to the March 28, 1979 accident, I had no great concerns about being so close a neighbor to these nuclear reactors. I basically trusted the government and the industry in their assertions as to the safety of nuclear power. In fact, on March 28, while the accident was well under way, four generations of my family, from my sons to their great grandmother, walked together about our neighborhood enjoying that warm, sunny spring day. They even looked down at the huge cooling towers in the distance, totally unaware that radiation was spewing from the plant and that the sun rays weren't the only ones falling from the sky that day.

Since then, NRC studies have indicated that the Unit 2 reactor came within 30 to 60 minutes of melting down early that morning. That leaves less than one hour between what actually happened and a far worse catastrophe. That is too close for my comfort. This fact still scares the hell out of me, especially when I realize that this critical point in the accident occurred many hours before me, my family or most of the world knew anything about what was happening and about to unfold.

The confusing performance of Met-Ed, the NRC and all the various other agencies during the rest of that episode in March and April of 1979 has shaken all faith and trust I ever had in this country's nuclear industry. This past performance of Met-Ed cannot be ignored in considering the restart of Unit 1. The fact is that Met-Ed is a member of private industry whose primary concern and motivation is profit, not safety. With the stakes so high and risky, shouldn't safety come first? The March 28 accident and events since have proven to me that Met-Ed is not willing to spend enough, at the expense of profit, to employ enough talented expertise to safely run such a technically sophisticated plant. And I seriously doubt whether there is enough such super talent available for all the nuclear plants we've spread around our beautiful country.

If Unit 1 is restarted, I can imagine the fear and paranoia that will spread through this area every time the plant burps, as all these plants invariably do quite frequently. Many people, probably thousands, will live with suitcases packed. They will jump in fear at TMI's slightest stir.

I sincerely ask! Is this what America has come to? Are we to hold an entire community hostage for the sake of a private utility which has already grossly failed in its duties and responsibilities? Are we going to use our own citizens as guinea pigs to test the real consequences of the first full-fledged meltdown?

Met-Ed had our trust and lost it. The company let us down. Due to the possible magnitude of grave consequences should this company fail again, they cannot be given a second chance.

Closing these two plants will hurt one company, but it must be done. Such action will restore the faith and trust of the people here and around the country, and as a result, it will also strengthen the nuclear industry as a whole. The industry will have to respond positively to this clear and strong message that any utility that is so careless will face enormous economic consequences.

Therefore, I strongly hope and pray that this board will close Unit 1 forever. This is the only action that will return maximum peace and tranquility to this community. After what we've been through here, we deserve no less.

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