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June 17, 1981

Mac Cutchin, Esquire  
Office of the Executive Legal Director  
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

RE: TMI-Restart, Docket No. 50-289

Dear Mac:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter dated May 7, 1981 sent by Congressman Udall to Chairman Hendrie which is relevant to TMI-1 restart issues. Can you please tell me if the Chairman has answered the letter? If so, I believe the answer should be served on the TMI-1 Restart Board.

Very truly yours,

Ellyn R. Weiss

ERW/dmw  
Enclosure

cc: TMI-1 Service List



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May 7, 1981

The Honorable Joseph Hendrie  
 Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
 Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The record of the TMI inquiries indicates that during hot functional testing at TMI-2, a steam bubble developed in the high point of the pipe through which water flowed from the reactor pressure vessel to one of the steam generators. (This seems to be the event described on page 65 of the Report of the Senate Special Investigation into the TMI accident.) During the event in question, considerable difficulty was encountered in condensing the steam bubble, and it appears that persons present at TMI-2 on March 28, 1979 recalled this event as they sought to take actions to restore circulation between the reactor pressure vessel and the steam generators.

The recollection of the September 1977 event probably influenced judgements as to what would be required to restore circulation during the March 28 accident. For example, Mr. Brian Mehler told NRC investigators that following closure of the PORV block valve there had been a plan to enter the reactor building for the purpose of manually opening a valve at the top of the hot-leg. This plan was abandoned, however, once radiation levels prevented access to the valve in question. Later in the day, in a conversation between Mr. Leland Rogers, a B&W engineer assigned to TMI, and B&W staff in Lynchburg, Virginia, Mr. Rogers, in disagreeing with advice that the primary coolant system be filled, indicated that he believed this could not be done. In apparent reference to the 1977 event, Mr. Rogers said in that instance, "... it took us something like four days to get out of that thing to try and cool it down to where we could get that bubble out a similar condition here."

would have seemed to have been  
 in the NRC inquiries into the  
 1977 event to have been undertaken.

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