



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
HARRISBURG

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LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

THE GOVERNOR

June 2, 1983

Dr. Nunzio J. Palladino
Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing because of suggestions that the time has come for your commission to authorize restart of the Unit 1 nuclear generation station at Three Mile Island.

Nearly four years ago, I asked this commission to postpone any decision regarding Unit 1 restart because a number of serious health, safety, environmental, operational, management and other issues had yet to be resolved. I believe the commission acted in the public interest at that time by postponing its restart decision.

Nearly two and one-half years later, on Nov. 24, 1981, I repeated to this commission my concern that any action by the NRC to allow restart of TMI Unit 1 be preceded by adequate assurances that this facility can be operated safely.

Today, more than four years after the March 28, 1979 accident at the nearby TMI Unit 2 facility, I must advise you that while progress has been made, adequate safety assurances have not been fully provided with regard to Unit 1, either to me or to the people of this area.

My reservations are now principally focused on the possibility, to which this Commonwealth has objected, that TMI-1 would be operated by persons found to have cheated on their qualifying examinations, the possibility, raised by engineering technicians and others, that the radiation cleanup of the damaged TMI-Unit 2 may not be proceeding as safely as it should, and the possibility, raised last month by the NRC staff itself, that the levels of operator competence and integrity at TMI may not be as high as those which the public is entitled to expect.

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Left unresolved, these kinds of questions also could seriously jeopardize the substantial progress we have made in ensuring that the Unit 2 cleanup will be adequately funded under the cost-sharing plan I advanced in 1981.

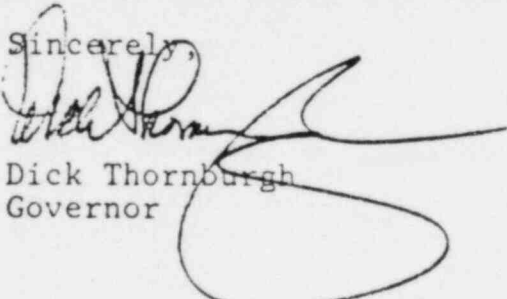
I believe, in fact, that all of these concerns bear on the safety assurances I have directed this Commonwealth to seek since 1979.

A prompt, thorough and effective investigation and public resolution of those issues raised in the Commonwealth's appeal of August 20, 1982, and those raised by your staff and by workers at the plant itself, is absolutely essential before this commission seriously entertains any action with regard to restart.

Before these issues are resolved, I would find it disturbing, indeed, for the commission to take action on restart. I would find it particularly inappropriate for the commission to take such action prior to hearing this Commonwealth's appeal on the operator cheating issue.

On behalf of all who live within the shadow of Three Mile Island, all who believe that public health and safety must be the first concern of those who see a future for commercial nuclear power, and on behalf of the integrity of the commission and the regulatory process it represents, I once again urge you and your colleagues to postpone any decision on restart until these issues have been satisfactorily addressed and resolved.

Sincerely,



Dick Thornburgh
Governor

cc: Commissioner Gilinsky
Commissioner Ahearne
Commissioner Roberts
Commissioner Asselstine

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