

January 12, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman Palladino
Commissioner Gilinsky
Commissioner Asselstine
Commissioner Bernthal
Commissioner Roberts

FROM: Jane Lee
183 Valley Rd.
Etters, PA 17319

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SUBJECT: BRIEFING/POSSIBLE VOTE ON TMI STEAM GENERATORS
(Wednesday, December 7, 1983)

Comments rendered by several NRC Commissioners during the briefing reveal the culpability of Chairman Palladino and Commissioner Roberts. Their own words cast doubt on their ability to follow the law of intent to protect the health and safety of the public. Indeed, even to discern the difference between right and wrong.

Specifically:

Commissioner Roberts:

"How long have we had steam generators, the heat exchangers? Hundreds of years. We are talking about repairing a heat exchanger. To me, there is nothing exotic or unusual. We are not breaking new ground. Of course, you have some attenuate circumstances. You are working in a confined source and it is done in the field but repairing a heat exchanger is not exotic technology." Pg. 58

Commissioner Roberts misses the point by a mile and ignores the releases of radioactivity into the atmosphere thereby threatening the health and safety of residents who reside in close proximity to a nuclear power plant.

There is a substantial difference between steam generators/heat exchangers in a nuclear plant and a non-nuclear facility. We know and the Commissioners should be aware that even though the tubes are repaired they will continue to release radioactivity into our environment along with the daily venting of krypton from unit 2 and the anticipated releases that will follow with the cleanup of unit 2. The entire coolant system of Unit 1 is now radioactive and has been radioactive for some time. All this radioactivity is cumulative and will/is having a devastating effect on the health of those who live in the vicinity of this site. See enclosure for leak path from S.T. tubes.

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Commissioner Roberts: Pg. 68

"Let's face the realities of life. This is Three Mile Island for goodness sakes. Surely the Staff is going to be overly reactive to anything that has to do with that plant and to criticize this on the fact that you and your people spent a lot of effort on it. I don't think that in and of itself proves the point".

"Everybody is sensitive to Three Mile Island, the damaged reactor or the undamaged. I don't think there is any weight to the argument that; Oh, my goodness, look at this \$400,000 that we spent or the two and a half man years. That makes no sense at all. It is an absolute red herring to say that this was a novel way. This was an improvement in a very simple method of joining a tube to a tubesheet".

Commissioner Roberts' suggestion that NRC Staff suffers from over reaction due to the embarrassing circumstances at Three Mile Island, flies in the face of the Staff's continuous suppression of hard evidence in order to prevail upon the Commission to relicense the applicant. Staff is neither sensitive or over reactive when it comes to concealing pertinent evidence from the Commission or concerning itself with the health and safety issues.

Contrary to Commissioner Roberts pronouncements, this procedure is novel in the sense that this procedure is a first with nuclear steam generator tubes. The Commissioner uses a play on words to obscure the painful realities. If this is not a novel procedure, why did the Commission waste two and a half man years and \$400,000 to study the situation?

Commissioner Roberts: (In responding to Mr. McCracken on tube repairs)

"You framed it differently. You said the research was to confirm it was as good as a new one but earlier you said it was better, is that not correct? Pg. 92

McCracken:

In fact, when they completed the research---".

Would Commissioner Roberts and the Staff have us believe that brand new tubes in a brand new steam generator are less viable than repaired tubes? If such is the case, what does this tell us about the stability of any newly installed steam generator tubes?

Chairman Palladino: Pg. 80

"Suppose we were addressing this situation de novo. We had complete freedom to do whatever was right. What would you propose we do? Pick it early enough so we can pick our starting point. There have been found some corrosion cracks in the steam generator and they need to be repaired. Now what would be the right thing to do both from the applicant and the NRC standpoint?

Herein lies the crux of the problem with Commissioners Palladino and Roberts. These particular Commissioners are filled with suppositions and doubts of what is right which leads the Commission nowhere and creates additional confusion. Not once have I observed concern about the health and safety issues but they ask "What is the right thing to do for the applicant (licensee) and the NRC standpoint?"

The realities are that the accident at TMI is not a new situation (de novo), as Palladino fantasizes, it is five years old. The only obscure issues are the Commission's own Staff who seek to conceal evidence. There is sufficient information already available to convince a blind man that GPU is not fit to operate a nuclear power plant. Yet these Commissioners ask: What is the right thing to do? Or, do we have complete freedom to do whatever is right? Are these Commissioners sincere in looking at the issues and the violations of the licensee to render a verdict that would protect the health and safety of the public? Or are they merely looking for an escape hatch to avoid the painful realities?

Anyone so anxious to accommodate industry, the nuclear industry in particular, with no questions or concerns about the health and safety of innocent men, women, children and the unborn, should tender their resignation forthwith on the grounds they lack sufficient knowledge on nuclear power plants and the erosion of their creditability and competence undermines their ability to render decisions based on the law. There is really little left to be said when Commissioners require prompting on what is right and how much freedom they have to make a decision.


Jane Lee

JANE LEE
183 Valley Road
ETTERS, PA 17319

BUSINESS

after the mishap began, the Ginna reactor was brought to a "cold shutdown." Five workers from the plant had sustained minor contamination but there was no evidence of significant radiation beyond the plant's boundaries. "This accident didn't come within a country mile of Three Mile Island," said Frank Orienter, spokesman for RG&E.

Tube Trouble: The Ginna accident once again raised the possibility of a nuclear disaster. The failure of a steam-generator tube—the likely cause of the accident—is a problem that has plagued the industry for years. The huge steam generators contain thousands of slender, U-shaped nickel-alloy tubes, which act as the plant's primary heat exchangers. But the steam generators, designed to last 30 years, have compiled a dismal track record—corroding, leaking and rupturing in many plants after only a few years' use. Two plants have had to replace entire steam generators, and others are operating at reduced power because so many tubes have been plugged to prevent ruptures. Last week, in fact, operators of Three Mile Island disclosed that TMI's Unit 1 reactor—not involved in the 1979 accident—has 4,000 faulty tubes, which will take six months to repair. Industry experts warn that the trouble will continue. "There are problems with these materi-

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als," says Ronald Haynes, a regional administrator for the NRC and the top Federal official at the Ginna accident.

The industry also has far broader problems. It and the Federal government have not yet agreed on a permanent nuclear-waste-disposal plan, and eighteen states have passed laws prohibiting or restricting nuclear disposal. Four others are considering legislative barriers of their own.

The industry's worst troubles are caused by the economy. High interest rates, soaring construction costs and sluggish growth in demand for electricity have dampened investors' enthusiasm. In 1980 fourteen utilities had bond ratings lowered, and last year at least four suffered a similar fate. "There's been a lot of trouble raising long-term capital due to the low financial health of the industry," says John Kellenyi, utilities analyst for Drexel Burnham Lambert.

One major concern is the cost of buying electricity from other sources when a nuclear plant is shut down. At Ginna, RG&E will pay between \$250,000 and \$400,000 a day for replacement power and the plant is expected to be out of operation for some time while the steam generator is repaired. Who pays the cost? "Ultimately," says RG&E vice president David Laniak, "it will be passed on to the consumer."

WILLIAM D. MARBACH with SUSAN AGREST and JOHN CAREY in Rochester, MARY LORD in Washington and bureau reports

