

March 5, 1981

"There is no question in my mind that if we had information that temperatures were reaching 2,500 degrees, we would have moved people away from the reactor that morning." This is Commissioner Gilinsky's statement regarding the NRC's lack of information about conditions at TMI on March 28, 1979. Those of us with a deep and abiding concern about nuclear power are often told that if we only understood nuclear technology our concerns would disappear. Commissioner Gilinsky does understand that technology; that is precisely the reason for his statement regarding the safety and protection of people in this area.

Often, in my mind's eye, I see clearly all of those children waiting for school buses on March 28th, farmers plowing and planting; all of us going about our everyday lives unaware of the danger so near to us. The licensee, however, was very well aware of the danger to us. Who was protecting our children? Was Met-Ed? Was the NRC? Was the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board?

Is the word safety listed first in your title simply because it is in keeping with the public's sense of the fitness of things, or does it read that way because it really is your task to consider safety the priority? If so, we have not seen one shred of evidence that this is indeed the case. Neither the utility nor the governmental agencies established to regulate nuclear utilities have made the health and safety of people the primary concern. Many other concerns have been subjected to minute scrutiny; our major concerns have been denied or diluted by agency surveys that are manifestly biased.

We know that this board cannot assure us that Met-Ed will now operate a nuclear reactor capably and responsibly. This board cannot assure us that when there is another accident at TMI, we will be treated differently from the way we were treated in March 1979. This board cannot assure us that we will be told the truth, given time and opportunity to protect ourselves, and that all those who are responsible for public health and safety will do just that: be responsible in every sense of the word.

In the absence of these assurances, this board has no moral or legal right to recommend the restart of TMI, Unit 1.

Office of the  
 Secretary  
 March 18/81

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Helin M. Hocking  
 332 Valley Road, E. Troy, Pa.  
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