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Docket No. 50-320

JUN 2 1981

Mrs. Joanne M. Young
401 Norman Road
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania 17011

Dear Mrs. Young:

I have been asked to reply to your letter to President Reagan regarding what has been and continues to be done towards cleaning up TMI Unit 2. Of course, I can speak only to the NRC's role which is essentially that of regulating TMI-2 cleanup operations and to ensure the protection of the public health and safety. In that capacity, with a 20 person staff permanently stationed at TMI, the NRC approves and oversees the implementation of cleanup activities performed by the operator of the reactor, Metropolitan Edison Company. To provide you with a more detailed discussion of the NRC's specific role and objectives with respect to the cleanup, I have enclosed the NRC NUREG Report 0698 entitled "NRC Plan for Cleanup Operations at Three Mile Island Unit 2".

On March 9, the NRC issued a Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement related to the decontamination and disposal of radioactive wastes resulting from the accident. In that statement, a wide range of alternative activities necessary for decontaminating the TMI-2 facility, defueling as well as disposing of the radioactive wastes were studied. The potential impacts that the various cleanup activities discussed could have on the environment, members of the public and plant workers were also analyzed. Comments received from the general public and other government agencies and organizations were incorporated in the final statement. Among the major conclusions reached were that;

- a. On balance, the benefits associated with full facility decontamination, core removal and disposal of the radioactive wastes generated from the accident greatly outweigh the environmental costs of cleanup activities, and
- b. Full cleanup of the facility must proceed as expeditiously as is reasonably feasible, consistent with ensuring public health and safety and protecting the environment.

A copy of the final PEIS is also enclosed for your information.

As for specific decontamination and waste disposal activities completed thus far, 75 to approximately 80% of the auxiliary fuel handling building has been cleaned up as well as krypton vented to decontaminate the reactor building atmosphere. In addition, 500,000 gallons of radioactive water, about one third of the total generated during the accident, have already been processed. Subsequently, this past March the Commission approved the shipment of low level waste disposal of 22 resin liners used in processing the water. These resin liners are currently being shipped from TMI to Hanford, Washington for final burial.

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With respect to the decontamination of the balance of accident water which is in the reactor building sump and reactor coolant system, Metropolitan Edison has designed and practically completed construction on an ion exchange system, known as the Submerged Demineralizer System (SDS), to clean up these high specific activity liquids. Metropolitan Edison is currently performing functional tests of various SDS components to verify that the equipment will operate as designed. The SDS is presently undergoing a safety evaluation review by the NRC staff. If, as expected, the NRC staff's Safety Evaluation Report is completed by mid-July, and if the system is approved, the SDS could begin processing water by late summer. It is estimated that this decontamination process will take in excess of one year.

Eleven entries into the main reactor building have also been made by Metropolitan Edison personnel since July 23, 1980. NRC staff onsite at TMI have closely monitored the tasks performed during these entries, which include the collection of contaminated samples, repair, replacement and/or installation of various equipment, as well as experimentation with different decontamination techniques, all of which are intended to assist in the ongoing decontamination efforts.

I hope this and the enclosed materials give you a better idea of some of the specific progress being made to clean up TMI-2.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bernard J. Snyder, Program Director
Three Mile Island Program Office
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:
As Stated

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BApplebaum/ned Olynch

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BSnyder
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