UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

DEC 03 1985

The Honorable Arlen Specter
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Specter:

We are pleased to respond to your inquiry of November 8, 1985, regarding the concerns of one of your constituents, Ms. Carolyn M. Sena. Ms. Sena noted that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has recently authorized the restart of Unit 1 of the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station (TMI-1) and inquired regarding whether improved safeguards were built into the plant. Ms. Sena also inquired regarding whether these improved safeguards had been built into Unit 1 of the Philadelphia Electric Company's Limerick Generating Station located near Pottstown, Pennsylvania.

Ms. Sena's concerns appear to deal principally with whether the improvements required as a result of the accident at TMI-2 had been implemented at the TMI-1 and Limerick Unit 1 plants prior to authorizing their operation. In this regard I note that following the TMI-2 accident, the Commission paused in its licensing activities to assess the impact of the accident. During this pause, the recommendations of several groups established to investigate the lessons learned from TMI-2 became available. These recommendations were correlated and assimilated into a TMI action plan. Guidance relating to implementation of the action plan was published in NUREG-0737, "Clarification of TMI Action Plan Requirements," in November 1980 and in Supplement 1 to NUREG-0737 in December 1982. Thus, licensing requirements based on the lessons learned from the TMI-2 accident were established to provide additional safety margins, both for plants with pending applications for operating licenses as well as plants already authorized to operate.

The development and implementation of such requirements for TMI-1 followed a plant specific review process which began following the March 1979 accident at TMI-2, when the Commission issued an order, dated July 2, 1979, requiring the undamaged reactor at TMI-1 to remain in a shutdown condition until further order of the Commission and that a public hearing be conducted prior to any restart of the facility. The hearing involved a wide range of matters, including plant design and procedures, Unit 1 and 2 physical separation, emergency planning, and the management capability and technical resources of the licensee. In addition, the Commission divided the issues into two categories, namely, short term and long term actions. Short term actions included all items, both plant design changes as well as other items, which were necessary and sufficient to provide reasonable assurance that TMI-1 can be operated without endangering the public health and safety and which were required to be completed before resumption of operations. The long term items are actions to be accomplished by the licensee

necessary and sufficient to provide reasonable assurance that the facility can be operated for the long term without endangering public health and safety and are required to be implemented as soon as practicable.

The hearing was conducted over six and a half years and some phases of the hearing are still in progress. As a result of this hearing, many changes have been made to the TMI-1 plant design, procedures, and management. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission determined on May 29, 1985 that the short term actions were completed and reasonable progress was being made on the long term items and voted to lift the 1979 shutdown order. An order effecting this decision by the Commission was then issued. This order was then appealed through the Federal Courts. On October 2, 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court lifted the judicial stay on the order and TMI-1 was allowed to restart on October 3, 1985.

The present design and operation of TMI-1 represents a significant improvement from its status in 1979 and will be further enhanced when the long term items are complete, most of which are scheduled for completion by early 1987.

The Limerick Generating Station utilizes boiling water reactors, whereas TMI-1 utilizes a pressurized water reactor. In the recently concluded review of the for an operating license for Limerick, Unit 1, the plant design was reviewed with respect to those portions of NUREG-0737 and its Supplement No. 1 which are applicable to a boiling water reactor of the Limerick design.

The results of the NRC staff reviews discussed above are included in various safety evaluation reports and their supplements which are available in the local public document rooms, i.e., in the State Library for Pennsylvania in Harrisburg for TMI-1 and in the Pottstown Public Library for the Limerick plant.

In conclusion, we are confident that the implementation of the requirements that resulted from the reviews of the accident at TMI-2 provides a significant improvement in the protection of the public health and safety. We trust that this information will be helpful to you in your communications with Ms. Sena. Your inquiry of November 8, 1985, is being returned as you have requested. Should you have further questions please contact us.

Sincerely,

(Signed) T. A. Rehm

William J. Dircks
Executive Director for Operations

Enclosure:
Inquiry dated November 8, 1985

LB#2/DL/PM	LB#2/DL/LA	LB#2/DL/BC	AD/DL/DL	AD/OR/DL	D/DL
REMartin:lb	EHylton	WButler	TMNovak	GLainas	HThompson
11/21/85	11/22/85	11/22/85	11/27/85	11/12/85	11/ /85

D/NRR	D/NRR	OCA	D/EDO
DEisenhut	HDenton		WDircks
11/ /85	11/ /85	11/ /85	11/ /85

Green Ticket No. 001176
Docket File
NRC PDR
Local PDR
PRC System
NSIC
EDO Control No.
EDO Reading File
WDircks
DEisenhut/HDenton
RMartin
EHylton
LB#2 Reading
HThompson/MJambour
Vogler, OELD
TNovak/JLedbetter
DMossburg, P-428, (#001176)
GLainas
OCA
SECY (85-975)
TMurley