

THREE MILE ISLAND

ALERT

October

1983

315 Peffer Street; Harrisburg, PA 17102

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CLEAN AIR ORDINANCE PASSED

With "aye" votes from Jack Minnich and Larry Hochendoner, the Dauphin County Commissioners voted to adopt a Clean Air Resolution on September 22.

The action requires the County to establish a Clean Air Task Force to propose standards for radioactive emissions into the atmosphere from Three Mile Island. It was seen by TMIA Chairperson Randy Smedley as a "victory for the people of Dauphin County."

"People throughout the county wrote letters, made phone calls and personally lobbied the Commissioners to take this action," Smedley said, "and I believe it is a necessary first step for the people in gaining some control over operations at TMI."

The push for the Clean Air Resolution started when TMI-PIRC and Commissioner Hochendoner went public with plans for the resolution in late August. Since then, public support for the measure steamrolled, as evidenced by Hochendoner's claim after the measure was approved that he received more messages of support for the clean air action than he did for the restart referendum.

The grassroots support for this measure, some think, may be rooted in the frustration of area residents who found that years of sending messages to every conceivable level of government through every conceivable means failed to get results. The frustration was evidenced in the words of Commission Chairman John Minnich as he addressed the NRC the week before the the Clean Air Resolution was passed.

Minnich told the NRC that he made a point of speaking with county residents who do not live near the plant and who are not members of pro- or anti-TMI groups and asking them their reaction to TMI. Invariably, he said, the message was that the people don't want it and it should be closed down, decontaminated and decommissioned.

County Resolution Calls for Shut Down

Minnich's words before the NRC were incorporated into a resolution introduced by Commissioner Norm Hetrick calling for the NRC to "decontaminate Units 1 and 2 at TMI and decommission both units." That resolution passed unanimously just before the Commissioners approved the Clean Air resolution.

Commissioner Hetrick voted "present" on the Clean Air measure, saying he thought the proposal had severe problems. He did suggest, however, that the county could stymie the reopening of TMI through other means, including withholding the county's endorsement of the evacuation plans.

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CLEANUP FACES FUNDING SETBACK

TMI's cleanup budget for 1984 has been cut in half as the federal government is withholding cleanup funds because GPU could not generate cleanup funds from the nuclear industry.

The federal Department of Energy(DOE) was expected to provide \$14-\$20 million towards the cleanup during fiscal 1984. This money, coupled with GPU customer revenues, state funds, insurance money and \$20 million from the nuclear industry was expected to fund this year's cleanup activities--including removal of the damaged Unit-2 fuel core.

The funding shortfall, revealed at the NRC Citizens Advisory Panel meeting in Harrisburg on September 28, prompted panel vice chairman Joel Roth to term DOE's threat as "blackmail."

Unfortunately, the nuclear industry has not yet contributed a single dollar of the \$60 million it pledged to help the cleanup. The pledge by the industry was in response to Gov. Dick Thornburgh's call for industry contributions totalling \$160 million to finance the cleanup. The industry's position, however, is that none of the pledged funds will flow to TMI until a total of \$100 million has been pledged.

The failure of the industry to come through with promised funds prompted Middletown Mayor Robert G. Reid to accuse the industry of "playing their silly games" while putting the people of this area "in the middle."

DOE's decision was also impacted by a straw vote of Pennsylvania's Public Utility Commission in which the PUC said it would probably not allow GPU to tap additional customer revenue for the cleanup.

The PUC rejected a request by the Pennsylvania Electric Company and Metropolitan Edison for permission to divert an additional \$22 million a year in ratepayers' money to the cleanup of TMI-Unit 2.

The unanimous vote of the Commission came Tuesday, September 20, when the PUC rejected the proposal which would have brought ratepayers contributions to the level outlined in Gov. Dick Thornburgh's plan to finance the cleanup. However, the PUC said they believe customers should not pay more money for cleanup while the nuclear industry has not met its contribution under the Thornburgh plan.

The two utilities, owners of Three Mile Island, already are spending \$16 million of ratepayer funds annually towards Unit-2 cleanup. The PUC's decision prevents them from diverting any additional ratepayers' monies into the cleanup, at least for the time being.

Cleanup of the damaged and dangerous fuel core could be delayed until next year.

(Clean Air continued from page 1)

Area Officials Urged Passage

Pressure to pass the measure came not only from the general public, but from elected officials as well. Penbrook Borough Council voted unanimously to urge the Commissioners to "quickly pass the Clean Air general ordinance." Other elected officials, including Harrisburg City Council President Earl Gohl and Council Member Jane Perkins urged the same. George Hickernell, a Lower Swatara Twp. Commissioner, in voicing his support, said he considered the matter of "paramount importance." In fact, the only voiced opposition to the measure came from the Family and Friends of TMI and one local newspaper.

WHISTLEBLOWERS BACKED BY NRC

On the heels of the NRC's substantiation of charges raised by three TMI cleanup engineers concerning violations of safety procedures, Cong. George Gekas called on NRC Chairman Nunzio Palladino for assurances that there "is no immediate threat to the safety" of area residents.

The charges, raised by engineers Richard Parks, Lawrence King and Edwin Gishel, had alleged that the crane designed to lift contaminated equipment and debris out of the reactor containment vessel had not been properly tested by GPU and Bechtel personnel.

Finding substance to the whistleblowers' allegations, the NRC Office of Investigation released a report saying that plant operators had not adequately checked to see that Bechtel, the chief cleanup contractor, had followed company and NRC safety procedures.

REACTOR VOID LARGER THAN ASSUMED

Sonar testing showed that the hole, or void, in the TMI-Unit 2 reactor core is bigger than it was first thought to be. It is 10 feet across, the width of the core. The first 5 feet of the 12 foot deep core is empty, a void where once were control rods and the deadly fuel.

The wider gap was described as "not really significant" by Jack DeVine, technical planning director at TMI-Unit 2. He admitted the entire upper region of the reactor core is "highly embrittled and subject to falling apart," as a result of the March 28, 1979 accident.

The upper plenum (a metal plate which normally sits above the core and holds in place the control rods) does not seem to be distorted or embedded with fuel, but the lower, tight-fitting part of the plenum has not been assessed.

What lies below the void? DeVine declared that there is no known way to gather information about damage deep below the 5 x 10 foot hole in the core.

RICKOVER NOW GPU CONSULTANT

Hyman G. Rickover, the 83-year-old retired admiral and father of the nuclear navy, has been invited by GPU to review and report on the company's organization and management. Outspoken in his criticism of the commercial nuclear industry, Rickover is not likely to be bought by GPU.

Rickover paid a visit to the island on Monday, September 19, but without any fanfare or attention from the local press. Asked by **The New York Times** about deadlines, Rickover said he had none and that "it's a long way before I complete my inspection."

In his final testimony before Congress as a Navy officer Rickover said: "The thing that was wrong at Three Mile Island was not the design of the plant. It was the lack of supervision and carelessness in operation."

One observer noted, "Once again it looks like Murphy's Law will prevail for GPU. If Rickover takes a close enough look, he can't help but reinforce what we, the people, have been saying all along."

GILINSKY: MANAGEMENT MUST GO!

Saying that a new company to manage the TMI nuclear power plants is the only way to arrive at a solution to the TMI-Unit I restart in a reasonable time, NRC Commissioner Victor Gilinsky continued his attack on the management competency of General Public Utilities, TMI's owner.

In a letter to the other four NRC commissioners, Gilinsky said, "It goes without saying that such a (new) organization would have to be qualified by NRC, but this is bound to be less difficult than requalifying GPU as presently constituted."

Gilinsky's comments drew fire from NRC Chairman Nunzio Palladino who said it is difficult for the commission to reach a fair and objective decision "if a commissioner publicly states positions about the matters that are at issue."

Similar comments made by Gilinsky resulted in a motion from a conservative group asking that he be disqualified from voting on TMI's restart. The motion, filed by the conservative Washington Legal Foundation (a group which has intervened in federal regulatory matters since 1976), was dismissed by the NRC on the grounds the group had no legal standing to file such a motion.

THE WARNING - A DETAILED LOOK AT TMI ACCIDENT

Ever wonder exactly what happened during the TMI accident? Now there is a book which will tell you maybe even more than you want to know as it traces events on the island from the early minutes of the accident until the reactor reached its present "stable" state.

Written by CBS **60 Minutes** producer Ira Rosen and the author of the screenplay for the Academy Award winning film **The China Syndrome**, Mike Gray, **The Warning - Accident at Three Mile Island** follows the actions of TMI operators, Met-Ed management, the NRC, Gov. Thornburgh and Lt. Gov. Scranton, local emergency personnel, and others involved in the accident. Its in-depth chronology, based on a review of transcripts from hearings held to investigate the accident and on dozens of personal interviews, uncovers aspects of the accident not widely known by the general public--not even by local people who tend to know such things.

Did you know, for example, that at one point the NRC was considering starting a fire or setting off an explosion to destroy some pipes in Unit 2, just so they'd have a situation which they were trained to handle? Or that Unit 2 control room personnel wore respirators through much of the accident because radiation levels in the control room were too high to be without them?

The title of the book comes from a quote from Dr. Robert Pollard of the Union of Concerned Scientist. "You don't have the ultimate catastrophe out of the blue," says Pollard, "there's always some kind of warning. This was a warning."

The book is available from many local booksellers for \$7.95.

"STOP THE RESTART" RESTARTED

The "Campaign to Stop the Restart" is being reactivated by the TMI Public Interest Resource Center. PIRC is in the process of hiring another staff person to coordinate the campaign. Phase II of the campaign will focus on the upcoming fifth anniversary of the TMI accident. PIRC's new media committee is working on a speakers bureau and slide show in anticipation of increased demand as the anniversary nears to further inform and educate the public. Research is underway to assist the speakers. Volunteers for both speaking and research are needed.

CLEAN AIR - MORE TO BE DONE

Though passage of the Clean Air resolution by the County Commissioners is clearly a major victory, the battle is still far from over. TMIA members and other area residents should now write the Dauphin County Commissioners and:

1. **Thank Hochendoner and Minnich for their votes.**
2. **Urge the Commissioners to move as expeditiously as possible to name people to the Clean Air Task Force.**
3. **Note how important this issue is to you and ask their continuing support.**

WRITE: John Minnich Norm Hetrick Larry Hochendoner
County Commissioners, Dauphin County Court House, Front & Market Sts.
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Oct. 18- TMIA Planning Council Meeting, Friends Meeting House, 6th & Herr
Herr Streets, 7 P.M.
- Oct. 19- Pot-luck dinner with Bob Pollard of UCS, PSSU Bldg., 1037
McClay, 6 P.M.
- Oct. 20- PIRC Pledge Campaign Training, Friends Meeting House, 6th &
Herr Streets, 7:30 P.M.
- Oct. 24- Presentation of Hiroshima sculpture to City of Harrisburg,
Harrisburg Government Center, 1:15 P.M.
- Oct. 24- PIRC Stratagy meeting with Jan Beardon of Safe Energy Comm-
unications Council and Mike Totten of Critical Mass,
PSSU Bldg., 1037 MacClay, 7:30 P.M.
- Nov. 15- TMIA General Membership Meeting, Friends Meeting House, 6th
& Herr, 7 P.M. Election of Planning Council members

DELINQUENT DUES CAUSE DEBTS TO PILE-UP

MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE _____

CHECK MEMBERSHIP DESIRED:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5 low income and student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50 sustaining member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 regular membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 non-profit organization | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 club member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 5 non-member newsletter subscription | |

RETURN TO: TMIA
315 Peffer Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102



Nuclear operators must keep water leak records to one gallon per hour and must log results in a computer.

FALSE LEAK RATES CHARGED AT TMI

New doubts about GPU management competency and integrity were raised as the Nuclear Regulatory Commission admitted that reactor coolant water leak rates at **both** TMI Units 1 & 2 may have been falsified.

The charge stems from an on-going NRC investigation into the leak rates which was prompted by an allegation from former TMI-Unit 2 operator Harold Hartman that he and other operators routinely added water to the reactor's coolant system to keep within NRC requirements and to keep TMI-Unit 2 operating. Hartman's allegations concerning TMI-Unit 2 are now before a federal grand jury and an indictment may be forthcoming.

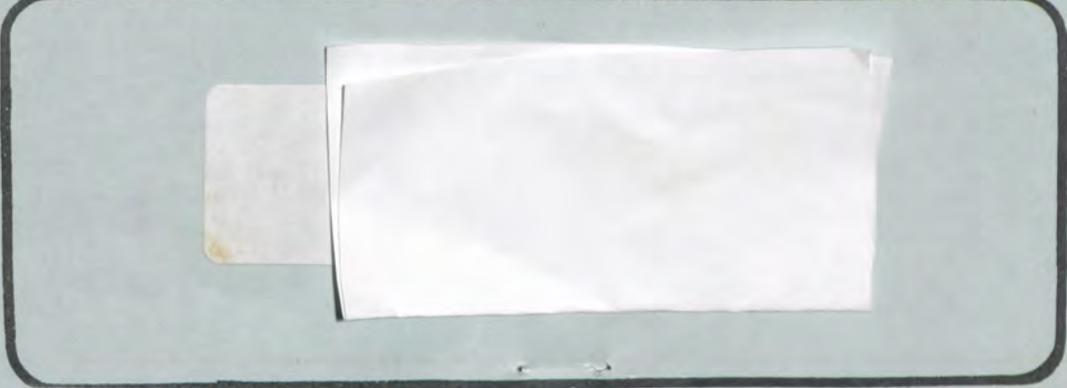
An earlier NRC study revealed four instances in which water was added to Unit I without being logged in the computer. No pattern emerged and explanations were accepted for this oversight, but further investigations reveal the problem is more extensive than investigators originally suspected. Some NRC experts believe this practice may have contributed to the inability of control room operators to properly assess and respond to the March, 1979 accident.

The NRC investigation into the Hartman allegations was curtailed in 1980, preempted by a federal grand jury investigation into the charges.

Citing "frustration over the slowness of the cleanup and the lack of committed funding for successful conclusion of the cleanup," Dauphin County Commission Chairman John E. Minnich resigned as chairman of the Advisory Panel for the Decontamination of TMI Unit 2. Minnich, who has chaired the 12 member panel since its formation in October 1980, reiterated his call for the decommissioning and decontamination of both units in his letter or resignation to NRC Chairman Nunzio Palladino.

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