

MAY 28 1980

Docket No. 50-320

Mr. Herman Dieckamp, President
General Public Utilities Corporation
100 Interpace Parkway
Parsippany, New Jersey 07054

Mr. R. C. Arnold
Senior Vice President
Metropolitan Edison Company
100 Interpace Parkway
Parsippany, New Jersey 07054

Dear Mr. Dieckamp and Mr. Arnold:

In Mr. Dieckamp's letter to Chairman Ahearne on March 4, 1980 he indicated that Metropolitan Edison will, in the near future, be requesting NRC approval to install and operate a specific system to decontaminate the water in the TH1-2 containment building.

By letter (TLL-160), dated April 10, 1980, Metropolitan Edison Company forwarded for NRC review and approval the Technical Evaluation Report for the Submerged Demineralization System (SDS). We initiated our review of the report and submitted a request (NRC/TH1-80-89, John T. Collins to R. C. Arnold, dated May 16, 1980) for additional information.

Our May 16 letter is not to be interpreted as approval of the Submerged Demineralizer System as the preferred technique for decontaminating the water in the Containment Building. Approval of any system will be preceded by NRC's evaluation of the environmental impacts of alternate techniques, as given in our final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), consistent with the Commission's policy on this matter, as enunciated in the November 21, 1979 Statement of Policy and Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (44 F.R. 67738). As the Commission stated, in keeping with the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act, a PEIS will be prepared in which the Commission will focus on environmental issues and alternatives before commitments to specific cleanup choices are made. The draft PEIS which is currently under preparation will serve to engage the public in the Commission's decision-making process.

Since Metropolitan Edison Company has not received NRC approval for use of its proposed system for cleanup of the contaminated water in the Metropolitan Edison Company's reactor building, purchase and installation of any portions of the system are at its own risk. Furthermore, the assumption by Metropolitan Edison Company that solid waste generated during operation of a cleanup system can all be disposed of in a commercial shallow land burial system is not valid. It is apparent that these wastes will be more like high-level wastes than material that is normally disposed of by shallow land burial. Further guidance will be provided by NRC as the questions of waste disposal are examined in the PEIS environmental reviews. Accordingly, it is very important that Metropolitan Edison Company

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consider appropriate handling for these highly active wastes so as not to foreclose potential future options for treatment to improve their form for long-term off-site storage or disposal.

In the interim until a system is approved by NRC, we consider it important that Metropolitan Edison Company promptly complete their contingency plan, which is being developed, to transfer the untreated water from the containment building to suitably shielded on-site tanks, should the need arise. Please advise within two weeks when we may expect this contingency plan for our review.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by
H. R. Denton

Harold R. Denton, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

cc: See Service Distribution List

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