



Three Mile Island Alert

Island Updates

News Watch on the
Harrisburg Area

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MARCH 1981

At March 28th Rally

THE PRESS AND JOURNAL Wednesday, February 25, 1981

Unions Go To Bat To Close TMI

On Monday morning in Harrisburg, leaders representing eight international unions formally announced their support in what has been predicted to be a massive National March on Harrisburg commemorating the second anniversary of the Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

The unions who have pledged their full support of the rally include: the United Mine Workers, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, the International Chemical Workers, Graphic Arts International, the United Auto Workers, the International Longshoremen's & Warehousemen's Union, United Furniture Workers of America, and the International Woodworkers of America.

At the news conference, the march organizers predicted that thousands of union members will be pouring into Harrisburg on March 28th with a list of demands. The union's platform regarding TMI include: keeping the nuclear power facility closed, especially Unit-I; not allowing the dumping of contaminated water from cleanup efforts into the Susquehanna River. The water resulted from cleanup up efforts at the damaged Unit-II reactor

Also outlined on Monday were three other demands: support of the United Mine Workers in their efforts to gain a decent contract; shorter work week and massive public works programs; and, guaranteed alternate jobs for nuclear workers at union rates.

"There is a new crisis at Three Mile Island," Joe Jurczak, United Mine Workers union spokesperson said at the meeting. "Dangerous levels of poisonous cesium have just been discovered in ground water in the area. At the same time, the owners of TMI are proposing to dump 700,000 gallons of radioactive water in the Susquehanna River, the source of

drinking water for hundreds of thousands of people. How long will the people of central Pennsylvania be forced to live with this nuclear nightmare?"

When asked if the United Mine Workers were utilizing the TMI issue as a foundation in order for them to gain a better contract, Jurczak denied the allegation. The UMW's contract expires on March 27th, the day before the tentative march rally.

Jurczak added that he was calling on all the people of the greater Harrisburg area to come to Harrisburg on March 28th to demand: "No more TMIs. Keep Units 1 and 2 shut down. No dumping of radioactive water in the Susquehanna River."

It was disclosed that full-time organizers have been at work in Harrisburg, Washington, D.C., Baltimore and New York in getting the word out to union members to attend and support the March 28th march in Harrisburg. "Here in Pennsylvania, for example," Jurczak stated, "the UMW has done a mailing to all of our locals urging them to mobilize for the march. We are putting three full-time organizers on the road for ten days each to visit our locals and help them mobilize."

Jurczak added that he believes that the march will be a historic demonstration. "We believe the entry of some of the country's leading unions into the fight to keep TMI shut down opens a whole new stage in the fight for safe, affordable energy and in the trade movement itself."

"We insist on representing the best interest of our membership and other people which is to eliminate this danger," said Earl Keihl, International Regional Director, United Furniture Workers of America. "The date of that accident has burned into our consciousness...everything we had worked for would have been abandoned, our homes, jobs

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URGENT!!

IMPERATIVE: That TMI UNIT 1 be kept CLOSED!

WHY?

1. Clean up of TMI 2 will take 10-12 years.
2. The entire island is contaminated.
(Even resident rats!)
3. We won't stand for another March 28th NIGHTMARE!!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Write a letter to the NRC urging TMI 1 be kept CLOSED!! National opinion is important! Pro-Nukes are organized and pressing for the re-start of UNIT 1.
2. Activate your friends and members to do the same.

Address letters to: Joseph Hendrie, Chairman NRC
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D. C. 20555



THANKS to those who have already sent letters!!

Scientists hit TMI cleanup plan

By MARY O. BRADLEY
Staff Writer

A committee of scientists contends the federal scenario for the Three Mile Island decontamination is "seriously deficient" in its discussion of psychological stress suffered by area residents, "superficial" in its treatment of the socioeconomic impacts of the cleanup and does "not . . . adequately" address other decontamination options.

While conceding that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's statement on the TMI cleanup "addresses an enormously complex problem," the committee of 10 scientists found that "a number of reasonable options and the associated magnitude of their costs and hazards have not been adequately considered."

The committee was formed by the Environmental Protection Agency to make an independent assessment of the NRC staff's Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on the TMI cleanup.

The assessment was not completed before the comment period on the NRC draft document closed, so the committee's review was sent to the EPA for transmission directly to the NRC commissioners for consideration when the final NRC impact statement comes up for approval. Paul Leech, an NRC environmental project manager, said the NRC staff expects to have the statement finished within two weeks.

Bernd Kahn, director of the Environmental Resources Center at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, was the EPA committee chairman. The committee expressed "strong support" that decontamination steps to allow core removal "should be performed as promptly as is consistent with maintaining public health and safety and subjecting the procedure to public review."

The scientists criticized the "quality" of NRC staff's "discussion of psychological stress" as "seriously deficient. The frequent characterization of public anxiety as 'phobic' or 'pathological' denigrates the legitimate concerns of the local populace and could call into question the objectivity of the analysis," the committee said.

(The NRC staff report said that "phobic concerns" of area residents about "possible events" that could happen during the cleanup "will cause some TMI residents to fear any agency-sponsored action.")

The committee said "insufficient scientific evidence and analysis are provided (in the NRC draft report) to estimate reasonably the

magnitude of the potential psychological, public health and community impacts" of the cleanup.

Further, the "treatment of socioeconomic impacts is superficial and of a lower scientific quality than that which characterizes the (NRC staff) statement as a whole." The socioeconomic impacts of discharging treated radioactive water into the Susquehanna River "and of alternatives to such releases must be considered," the committee said, even when the level of radioactivity in the discharges is below federal limits.

The committee recommended that the NRC consider transporting radioactive wastes resulting from the cleanup "to other locations for treatment, storage or disposal as an alternative to performing these activities on site." The committee said it believes "this option is technically feasible" and recommended "prompt development" of criteria for classifying the wastes into categories for transporting and processing.

The committee also recommended modification — "under emergency designation, if necessary" — of the regulations that prohibit removing the wastes to more suitable locations.

The committee expressed concern over plans to process at TMI the highly contaminated water from the reactor building's basement using the submerged demineralizer system. GPU Nuclear, which operates the plant, "may encounter complications due to the multiple uses of the fuel pools," where the SDS would be located.

The "integrity . . . over the long-term" of the liners that will be used to store the highly radioactive SDS-spent resins "is in question," and "the predicted decontamination factors for treating contaminated water may not be attained."

The effects of "potential accidents" during the cleanup should be considered, the committee said, including the possibility of a "criticality accident while the equipment hatch to the containment building is being used."

The broad-based committee drew members from the medical, technical and applied science disciplines, including Kenneth L. Miller, director of the division of health physics at the Hershey Medical Center, Dr. John L. Randall, associate director of the Lancaster General Hospital's department of family and community medicine, and Gordon Thompson, a representative of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Our Readers Write

Nuclear Power Vs. Coal Power

EDITOR:

IN A FEB. 19 Patriot letter, John J. O'Connell, Assistant Executive Director Labor and Industry for Energy and Jobs, addressed the issue of putting TMI-1 back in operation. He stated, "TMI-1 was never damaged and has been left idle for no mechanical reason" and that he "must assume that keeping this plant off line is only symbolic." I would remind Mr. O'Connell that nuclear power plants do not operate by themselves, they are operated by utility companies. The accident at TMI-2 in March 1979, raised numerous serious questions about Met-Ed's competency to safely operate a nuclear power plant. These questions and many others regarding the safe operation of TMI-1 are currently being deliberated in NRC hearings. Obtaining answers to these crucial questions is an attempt to provide citizens with the assurance of due process under the law.

Mr. O'Connell then provided some data in electricity costs. He stated "the cost of nuclear power is four-tenths of a cent per kilowatt hour and the cost of coal is 2.4 cents." A recent report prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy estimates the cost of nuclear power generation to utilities was 2.2 cents/kwh in 1979. The report also estimates that government subsidies to nuclear power have totaled \$37 billion since 1948, and notes that in the absence of subsidies, nuclear electricity would probably range from about 3.3 cents to 4.4 cents/kilowatt hour.

Mr. O'Connell concludes by referring to Virginia Electric & Power Company's December receipt of an operating license for a nuclear plant. He mentions that as a result they were able to reduce dependence on oil and delivered a rate reduction to ratepayers. If this is accurate, Virginia Electric (VEPCO) should be extremely pleased with nuclear power. It is interesting to note that VEPCO scrapped plans for the nuclear plants in 1977, and cancelled another in 1980. In response to the cancellations, VEPCO's president, William W. Berry, said that the next big power plant his firm will order will be coal and will be built only if beefed-up conservation measures fail. Why would VEPCO consider coal if, as Mr. O'Connell stated, coal is six times more expensive than nuclear?

—James Hurst
Middletown

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Boos, Jeers Resound as NRC Board Meets Public

Unit 1 Restart Finds Scant Support at Hearing Here

By RICHARD ROBERTS
Staff Writer

Most of the 30 or so people who addressed a U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission administrative law board Thursday night at the William Penn Museum urged that the undamaged reactor at Three Mile Island Nuclear Generating Station not be reactivated.

Only five people spoke out in favor of restarting Unit 1, and they were greeted with boos, catcalls and jeers from the often boisterous audience of about 300 who packed the museum's auditorium to hear their fellow citizens voice opinions before the three-member NRC Atomic Safety and Licensing Board.

The panel is holding hearings in Harrisburg on Metropolitan Edison Co.'s request to restart Unit 1, which was unscathed during the March 28, 1979, accident that severely damaged its twin, the Unit 2 reactor. The proposal is being fought vigorously by a number of anti-nuclear groups.

Thursday night's session was disrupted at one point when state Rep. Bruce I. Smith Jr., R-Newberry Twp., defied an order by Ivan W. Smith, board chairman, not to stray from the topic of Three Mile Island. Rep. Smith wanted to discuss a misunderstanding between the board and the museum on renting the auditorium.

When Rep. Smith was not deterred, an agitated Chairman Smith ordered the court reporter to stop transcribing and walked out, followed by fellow panelists Dr.

Walter H. Jordan and Dr. Linda W. Little. They were booed and derided by the crowd.

Rep. Smith, left sitting alone on stage, then appealed to the audience, saying, "If they can't read a one-page contract properly, how are they going to understand the needs of the community?" He was answered by resounding applause and cheers.

Franklin D. Linn Sr., president of the Lower Swatara Board of Commissioners, led off the public statements, saying his constituents oppose the operation of Three Mile Island as a nuclear facility and favor instead converting the power plant to another fuel source.

"I don't think Washington or anyone on the panel realize that the people who live in the area . . . really are uptight," he said. "Every day you hear the siren blow in the township and don't know whether it's TMI or not. We'd like to see the place cleaned up and squared away."

Susan Shetrom, representing the Harrisburg-based Three Mile Island Public Interest Resource Center, compared a decision allowing Met-Ed to restart the Unit 1 reactor while the cleanup of the Unit 2 reactor progresses to asking a child to perform two difficult tasks simultaneously.

"Do not invite another fiasco by restarting Unit 1," she said. "This is a gentle land not meant for the horrors of nuclear power."

Mary L. Bachofer, secretary of Friends and Family of TMI, said the 630 members of her group "urge

that Unit 1 be allowed to restart and return to full power as soon as possible, even as these hearings continue."

She said the March 1979 nuclear accident "would have been of great consequence only to the industry" but "has been used politically to the advantage of all sorts of persons and groups." She said "some irresponsible journalism" had helped fuel "public hysteria."

"Restrictions on nuclear energy such as these unnecessary hearings will force upon society an unimaginable reduction in the standard of living," she said. "We reject this alternative."

Anthony A. Ferrar of Hershey seconded Bachofer's plea, warning that central Pennsylvania industry might flee to the Sun Belt states if Met-Ed continues to charge increased electricity rates to pay for power to replace that lost because of the Unit 1 shutdown.

The recent discovery of radioactive rat droppings at Three Mile Island spurred numerous comments, including a chastisement of Met-Ed officials by Dennis Zerance of Newberry Twp.

"The straw that broke the camel's back for me was when a Met-Ed spokesman said no rats had left the island," Zerance said. "Do they have formations every night and hold a roll call?"

He likened the restart of the Unit 1 reactor to "building a fire next to one you are trying to put out."

YORK DAILY RECORD • WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1981

TMI reports 'deliberately misleading'

By JIM HILL
Of the Daily Record

While Three Mile Island officials were telling federal and state agencies that the reactor was under control on March 28, 1979, the officials knew that the nuclear core was in fact uncovered and overheating, a congressional report said Tuesday.

Instead of relaying the information about the hot nuclear core, TMI officials "presented . . . misleading statements that conveyed the impression that the accident was substantially less severe and more under control than what the managers themselves believed and what was in fact the case," the report concludes.

Metropolitan Edison Company was "afraid that if they brought the information to the attention of authorities, they (the authorities) would call for an evacuation," said a high-ranking majority staff

member of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, which wrote the report. The staff member asked not to be identified by name.

The committee investigation was launched primarily to learn "why it took two days to find out what was going on" during the crisis, the staff member said.

A taped telephone conversation shows that the TMI plant supervisor knew at 9 a.m. the day of the accident that temperatures inside the reactor core were 2,500 degrees. That was only five hours after the accident officially began.

Based on computer temperature readings given to him over the phone, the supervisor speculated that some of the inner-core instruments might be melting. "By the temperatures, he had to know that the core was uncovered," the staffer said. (An uncovered core is

no longer under water and is in danger of melting.)

The piece of paper listing those temperature readings "disappeared for about five weeks" after the accident, the staffer said. "Then it just turned up one day in May in the (TMI-2) control room."

While the supervisor was speculating on the condition of the core, state and federal emergency planning officials believed the reactor was under control.

And local radio stations were broadcasting official reports that TMI "was experiencing an on-site emergency" that would have no effect on the general public.

In the early hours of the accident, plant officials were uncertain if the core could be cooled. And so they were uncertain that their cooling plans would work, the report said.

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Ertel bill to aid TMI draws fire

By MICK ROOD
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Lobbyists for six national environmental groups have urged Pennsylvania congressmen this week not to sponsor a national property insurance proposal to finance on-site damage at Three Mile Island and future nuclear accidents.

A bill drafted by a House task force headed by Rep. Allen Ertel, D-Montoursville, would finance 70 percent of TMI cleanup costs not covered by private insurers (up to \$700 million or more) with premiums collected from other utilities and a special surcharge against Metropolitan Edison. Ertel wants an endorsement from Pennsylvania members of the House at a delegation meeting next week before he introduces the bill.

The environmentalists' letter attempting to dissuade Pennsylvanians' support marked the first stand taken by a interest group likely to play a role in the Ertel bill's fate.

"We strongly oppose this legislation and believe that it represents an unsound approach to financing the TMI cleanup," the environmental lobbyists wrote

They claimed the Ertel task force had failed to prepare "a plan to assure that the specific financial and regulatory problems facing Met-Ed and General Public Utilities will not jeopardize the cleanup of TMI 2 . . ." The letter was signed by Washington representatives of the Environmental Policy Center, Friends of the Earth, Union of Concerned Scientists, Environmental Action, Sierra Club and Congress Watch, a Ralph Nader group that sometimes monitors environmental issues.

Ertel had not received the letter Thursday and would not comment without having read it.

While not proposing a clear alternative to the property insurance proposal, which would be mandatory for all nuclear utilities, the environmentalists raised five specific objections to the Ertel bill. They are:

—GPU's financial straits should be the primary responsibility of the utility and state regulatory commissions in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The financial issues are not something the federal government "can or should address," the lobbyists said.

—The task force bill ties the TMI cleanup to the "broader debate over the ways in which nuclear power plants are insured and financed," which goes "far beyond what is necessary."

—Because the bill would apparently pay off all uninsured costs except for the first \$50 million, the environmentalists figure it "would create a serious disincentive to proper management and quality control of nuclear plant construction." Federal policy should empha-

TMI panel to push quick waste removal

By PATRICE FLINCHBAUGH
Of the Daily Record

A citizens advisory panel moved onto other business Thursday after it had finished with the question of what to do with the contaminated water at the crippled Three Mile Island nuclear reactor.

The panel recommended to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that the federal Department of Energy accept the high-level radioactive solid wastes that will result from the cleanup of the nuclear plant.

The panel, formed by the commission to study cleanup alternatives, decided it would try to enlist the support of Gov. Dick Thornburgh in its attempt to push the federal energy agency toward quickly getting the wastes off the Middletown island.

The energy department previously committed itself to accepting TMI Unit 2's damaged core for research purposes. But it has been, and remained Thursday, reluctant to accept resins from accident related water cleaning systems.

According to panel member Thomas Cochran, a physicist with the National Resources Defense Council, the energy department is in disarray due to looming budget cuts and current vacancies in its permanent leadership. Moreover, it is caught between the wishes of the NRC and Congressional armed services committees, he said.

Both House and Senate armed services committees oppose comingling TMI wastes with high-level radioactive military wastes, said Cochran. But commercial sites legally cannot accept high-level wastes, so military-type disposal is the only option, he said.

Energy department spokesman Andrew Millunzi denied Cochran's charge that the department is in disarray. He said work on TMI-related issues continues, despite a lack of assistant secretaries caused by the change of presidential administrations.

"The Department of Energy is not in a position to say how many resins it will take for research purposes," said Millunzi, "I can't say any more than we are considering the possibility of accepting some of the wastes."

The citizens panel on Thursday also polished a list of six recommendations for decontaminating

the 1.6 million gallons of water trapped in Unit 2's basement. Those proposals are due before the Nuclear Regulatory Commissioners March 1.

Those suggestions included decontaminating the water promptly using Metropolitan Edison's proposed submerged demineralization system, should the water cleaner be approved by the NRC; recycling much of the accident-generated water for cleanup work; immobilizing the radioactive isotopes in the water as quickly as possible; setting goals for the amount of radiation the utility should remove from the water; storing the cleaned water temporarily in tanks on the island; and reviewing the appropriateness of that storage annually.

But before those recommendations were given final approval, Lancaster attorney Jean Kohr tried unsuccessfully to force the panel into recommending a position against eventual dumping of cleaned accident water into the Susquehanna River.

Ms. Kohr and Lancaster Mayor Arthur Morris were the only panel members who wanted the NRC to eliminate that option in its planning of the \$1 billion TMI decontamination.

The ultimate disposal of the water has become a rallying point for worried citizens — particularly in Lancaster, which gets its drinking water from the Susquehanna River. About 150 of them showed up at the panel meeting in the Harrisburg Forum to voice their discontent. A few picketed in front of the forum building.

The panel voted two weeks ago to recommend the water be stored temporarily in tanks on the island, to allow scientists to obtain accurate estimates of remaining radiation.

In a related development, plant officials reported they have found higher amounts of radioactive cesium 137 and cobalt 60 than previously reported at one of 15 groundwater monitoring stations on Three Mile Island.

Plant cleanup chief Bob Arnold said the levels were about twice federal drinking water standards.

But he said the radiation appears to be limited to a specific area and does not represent a hazard to the river or to off-site groundwater.

cont. P6

size cost-cutting and safety, they said. (Ertel has inserted a \$2 billion limit on insurance coverage for each accident, but the quasi-governmental corporation that would dispense payments could raise the limit.)

—The measure "does not appear to be an outright bailout," but the insurance corporation's "unlimited assessment powers has the same effect." Rather than link in-

surance premiums more closely to risks, the bill establishes the corporation "as the ultimate guarantor of the industry's financial solvency." The proposal "hardly meets" current demands for less government interference with private enterprise, the letter said.

—While the bill allows utilities \$50 million deductible insurance for its on-site property damage, citizens outside the plant proper who suffer injury, death or property loss because of an accident have "strictly limited" insurance coverage.

Mothers to carry fight to NRC panel

By MARY O. BRADLEY
Staff Writer

A group of Middletown mothers, fearful of the possible hazards posed by the restart of the Three Mile Island Unit 1 reactor, will carry their concerns to the federal panel deliberating the fate of the undamaged reactor next week.

Paula Kinney of Shope's Gardens said members of the group will make statements before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board March 5. The board will hold a special session from 7 to 10 p.m. at the William Penn Museum to accept public comments.

"It's very important that we go there and tell them how we feel," Mrs. Kinney

said. She said the mothers are worried that problems may develop if Unit 1 is restarted while the severely damaged Unit 2 reactor is still being decontaminated.

She called the proposal to restart Unit 1 during the cleanup "absurd and ridiculous."

Mrs. Kinney said the mothers also plan to picket one of the board's regular sessions which are held in the meeting room at the Walnut Street Parking Garage.

The mothers, who are not affiliated with any group, were initially stymied in an attempt to stage a protest at the NRC office in Middletown and to meet with an NRC official when they found the office closed Tuesday. Mrs. Kinney said there was a misunderstanding by a member of

her group over the office's hours of operation. It is normally closed on Tuesdays.

Many of the mothers and their children who arrived earlier than the designated 11 a.m. protest left when they "saw the office was closed and assumed we were going to do it another day," Mrs. Kinney said. However, she said, five mothers and eight children remained.

The NRC's top on-site man at TMI, Lake H. Barrett, deputy director of the NRC Program Office, went to the NRC Middletown office after receiving news media inquiries about the protest. "I did talk with them for about 45 minutes," Barrett said. "They expressed their feelings about not wanting Unit 1 to restart and the stress they are under. I said I would relay those concerns on" to other NRC officials, he added.

Mrs. Kinney said the group told Barrett, "We're mothers and we're very concerned about bureaucracy."

Meanwhile, in an unrelated matter, the NRC's Citizen's Advisory Panel for the Decontamination of Unit 2 has recommended that the NRC approve the submerged demineralizer system to process the highly radioactive water in the reactor building's basement.

In a letter to the NRC, the panel also proposed minimum amounts of radioactivity to be allowed in the purified water.

The Patriot, Harrisburg, Pa., Friday, March 6, 1981

Reagan OKs TMI Aid

President Reagan has approved inclusion of \$27 million in the proposed 1982 federal budget for a Department of Energy research project aimed at facilitating Three Mile Island cleanup efforts, U.S. Energy Secretary James B. Edwards Jr. advised Gov. Dick Thornburgh Thursday.

The governor said he and key members of his administration and the state's Washington office have been engaged since shortly after Reagan's inauguration in private talks with Edwards and other administration officials about the problems posed in the aftermath of the TMI accident.

During the discussions, Thornburgh has urged that consideration be given to the establishment of a federally financed research effort to ensure the quickest and safest possible cleanup of the damaged nuclear reactor.

"We are very gratified that these discussions have culminated in the president's decision today, particularly coming as it does at a time when there is an understandable desire to cut the federal budget wherever possible," Thornburgh said.

The governor said the \$27 million project would focus on problems related to gaining entry to the core area, assessing core damage, and developing plans for the safe decontamination and disposal of radioactive elements in the reactor facility.

The Patriot News, Hbs., Feb. 28, 1981

Radioactive Rodent Droppings Discovered in TMI Building

MIDDLETOWN (UPI) — Radioactive rodent droppings have been found in the basement of a building adjoining the contaminated Three Mile Island Unit No. 2 nuclear reactor, plant officials said Friday.

The basement of the crippled reactor remains flooded with 60,000 gallons of radioactive water which spilled during the plant's March 1979 accident, the nation's worst commercial nuclear acci-

dent.

The droppings were found in several areas of the basement of the control and service building. Officials said exterminating crews were summoned to catch the rodents so that radiological tests can be done on them.

The rodents on the island in the Susquehanna River near Harrisburg would have to move to the mainland in large numbers for them to pose a public health risk.

The Evening News, Harrisburg, Pa., Wednesday, March 4, 1981

Hendrie reappointment draws fire on two fronts

By EDWARD ROBY
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Anti-nuclear groups and at least one key congressman have attacked the administration's decision to replace John Ahearne with Joseph Hendrie as acting chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Rep. Toby Moffett, D-Conn., called Hendrie's promotion Tuesday "an extraordinary, clear signal that the Reagan administration wants to forget about the Three Mile Island accident and go back to business as usual in the nuclear industry."

Richard Pollock, director of Ralph Nader's Critical Mass group, called the move disgraceful because Hendrie was ousted as chairman by President Carter after a presidential commission said the NRC's handling of Three Mile Island showed fundamental changes were needed.

And Robert Pollard of the Union of Concerned Scientists, a former NRC reactor inspector who once worked under Hendrie, said whether or not Hendrie is chairman, he is "not the type of person who belongs on the NRC in first place.

"He's still going to continue his practice of sacrificing safety to help the nuclear industry," he said.

On Tuesday, Hendrie, the lone Republican on the commission, presided over his first NRC meeting as chairman since he was deposed on Dec. 7, 1979.

Ahearne, a Democrat, remains a commissioner. With Commissioners Victor Gilinsky and Peter Bradford often pitted against Hendrie on issues of tighter safety controls on industry, Ahearne often casts the decisive vote.

As chairman of the House environment, energy and natural resources subcommittee, Moffett said he noticed Hendrie "has repeatedly shown impatience with anyone who dares doubt that all is well with the nuclear industry.

"This does not bode well for those of us who believe the nuclear industry must be rationally and objectively evaluated, based on its actual performance, not its rosy promises."

President Reagan has yet to fill the vacancy on the five-member panel left last summer when Richard Kennedy's term expired. But the panel already has its legal limit of three Democrats.

