

September 5, 2000

Mr. & Mrs. Kip Adams
43 River Road
Airville, PA 17302

SUBJECT: QUESTION FROM PUBLIC MEETING ON AUGUST 1, 2000

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Adams:

During the public meeting on August 1, 2000, at the Peach Bottom Inn, Delta, PA, you asked if there was an increase in Peach Bottom's main stack radiological gas emissions following an automatic reactor shutdown.

In response to your question, we reviewed the recorded data for the last two automatic reactor shutdowns at Peach Bottom, which occurred on September 1999 (Unit 2) and August 2000 (Unit 3). The data indicated that the radiological gas emissions were higher than the levels that existed prior to the shutdown for about an hour and then returned to pre-shutdown levels. These increases in emissions are not unexpected and do not result in any significant offsite dose consequences. Any calculated radiation doses associated with the increases are incorporated into offsite dose estimate totals for reporting to the NRC.

The increases in main stack radiological gas emissions are principally from noble gases which are monitored and controlled in accordance with NRC regulatory requirements referenced in Peach Bottom's NRC - approved Offsite Dose Calculation Manual. These regulatory requirements are license requirements, quite stringent, and based on maintaining radiation exposure to members of the public to as low as is reasonably achievable (ALARA). The regulations specify annual dose limits for individuals in unrestricted areas for gaseous effluents, which include noble gas emissions. For Peach Bottom, the annual dose to the total body of an individual in the unrestricted area is to be limited to 10 millirems (a unit of radiation dose).

I'd like to provide some perspective on the total amount of gaseous effluents released in 1999, including normal operation and the September 1999 automatic plant shutdown at Peach Bottom. If a member of the public was at the Peach Bottom site boundary (an unrestricted area) continuously for 24 hours a day for the period January through December 1999, that individual would have sustained a total body dose of 0.103 millirems of radiation (i.e., 1.03 % of the NRC limit), well below NRC regulatory limits. In addition, and for comparison purposes, the average annual effective radiation dose equivalent to individuals in the United States is about 360 millirems as discussed in the attached NRC Technical Issues Paper on Biological Effects of Radiation. Consequently, any dose attributable to the emissions is a small fraction of that due to natural sources of radiation in the environment.

For additional information, I have also attached an NRC Technical Issues Paper on Environmental Monitoring. This paper and others, including the above referenced paper on Biological Effects of Radiation are available from the NRC's website (www.nrc.gov). Further, if you are interested in receiving a copy of the most recent radiological effluent and environment

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annual report concerning Peach Bottom, you may contact our Public Affairs Office at (610) 337-5330 or 5331.

Relative to your interest in plant tours, you should contact Ms. Fran Reining, Peach Bottom Communications Manager, at (717) 456-7014, Extension 4759.

We appreciate your interest in these matters and believe that the information we provided is responsive to your concerns. If you have further questions, you may contact me at (610) 337-5233 or via email at (cjc1@nrc.gov).

Sincerely,

/RA/

Curtis J. Cowgill, Chief
Projects Branch 4
Division of Reactor Projects

Enclosure: As Stated

Mr. & Mrs. Kip Adams

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