



56-219
Amergen Energy Company
U.S. Route #9 South
Post Office Box 388
Forked River, N. J. 08731-0388

DEC 06 2000

6530-002-2598

Dr. Stephen J. Morreale
Cornell University
Natural Resources Department
10 Fernow Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
(by cert. mail RRR #7099 3400 0001 9404 8949)

Dear Dr. Morreale,

Subject: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION FROM SEA TURTLE NECROPSIES

Incidental captures of sea turtles have occurred at our Oyster Creek Generating Station facility on several occasions during the 1990's as well as earlier this year. Many of the turtles have been alive when incidentally captured at our facility and those turtle have been taken to the Marine Mammal Standing Center (NMSC) in Brigantine, NJ. The MMSC is the representative of the Sea Turtle Stranding Network for the State of New Jersey, which has provided initial examination, care and feeding of live sea turtles incidentally captured at our facility prior to their release to the Atlantic Ocean. However, several turtles which were dead when incidentally captured at our facility have been sent to you to be necropsied in order to determine as much as possible about the condition of each specimen and the probable cause of death.

The first necropsy you preformed for us was on a juvenile Kemp's ridley incidentally captured at Oyster Creek on October 17, 1993. Your necropsy report for this specimen included the following comments:

Comments: The overall condition of this turtle was one of an otherwise healthy young Kemp's ridley, typical of the many that I have examined in northeastern waters. The lack of food in the gut is typical of the sea turtles that I have seen at this time of year and is indicative of a behavioral change prior to migrating southward. The lack of any obvious trauma would tend to

0001

implicate drowning as the cause of death to this animal. The lack of fluid in the lungs is not necessarily contradictory to this conclusion. It is my opinion that sea turtles suffocate underwater rather than inhaling water. The superficial scrapes on the plastron and neck were very fresh and probably occurred on the intake grates. However I could not tell whether these occurred prior to or after death. The only potentially contradictory evidence of this turtle having died as a result of impingement was the condition of the specimen. From the information given to me about the timing of death, the water temperature, and the subsequent handling of the carcass, I expected to observe slightly less decomposition. The moderate levels of decomposition of liver and gonad tissues are usually more representative of a turtle that has been dead for one to two days at those temperatures.

In addition to the Kemp's taken 10/17/1993, the following turtles were sent to you for necropsy but we have not received necropsy results:

- Kemp's ridley taken 7/1/1994;
- Kemp's ridley taken 7/12/1994;
- Kemp's ridley taken 9/4/1997; and
- Green taken 10/23/1999.

I have attempted to contact you repeatedly by email and telephone in order to obtain results from necropsies of these turtles but have received no response. We have been requested by the Northeast Region of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to obtain necropsy results and probable cause of death for the turtles listed above. Because we will be reinitiating our Section 7 Consultation with NMFS in the near future, it is requested at you provide this information to me at your earliest convenience. I can be reached by telephone at (609) 971-4124, by email at mbrowne@amergenenergy.com or at the address below. Thanks again for you past (and anticipated!) support.

Very truly yours,

Malcolm Browne

Malcolm Browne
Senior Environmental Scientist
AmerGen Energy Company
Oyster Creek Generating Station
Route 9 South
P.O. Box 388
Forked River, NJ 08731-0388

MEB/pk
Enclosures

USNRC Docket No. 50-219

cc: Carrie McDaniel (by cert. mail RRR #7099 3400 0001 9404 8826)
Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
Habitat and Protected Resources Division
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930

US Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mr. James Wilson, Mailstop O-11-F1
(by cert. mail RRR #7099 3400 0001 9404 8765)
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
One White Flint North
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852-2738