

**From:** Karen Cotton  
**To:** internet: WILLYSILVERA@aol.com  
**Date:** 10/10/02 3:00PM  
**Subject:** NRC - Response to your concern

Dear Mr. Silvera,

Your e-mail dated September 2, 2002, was forwarded to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for action. The NRC is responsible for regulating and overseeing commercial nuclear power plant operation and other uses of nuclear material.

We are sorry for the loss that your family has experienced over the years. We are not aware of any scientific studies to demonstrate an increased risk of cancer due to living near the vicinity of a commercial nuclear power plant.

In your e-mail you requested information about 1) the environmental changes caused by the operation of Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station (VCSNS) and 2) (any) accident reports associated with an experimental reactor from the 1950s.

Commercial nuclear power plants licensed by the NRC are required to comply with statutes and regulations concerning radiological and non-radiological releases to the environment. Operations controlling non-radiological releases from VCSNS are conducted in compliance with statutes and regulations designed to control and minimize adverse impacts to the environment. The NRC and many other State and Federal agencies require through their regulations that South Carolina Electric & Gas Company operate VCSNS in a manner that protects human health and the environment. For example, the NRC requires VCSNS to maintain compliance with its Clean Water Act 316(b) determination. The 316(b) determination is a document used to verify that the cooling water intake structure at the plant is operated in a manner such that adverse impacts to shellfish, fish, fish eggs, and larvae are minimized. Additionally, the State of South Carolina is responsible for protecting the environment around the plant through its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process. The NPDES permit sets standards on chemical and thermal discharges from the plant. VCSNS is also required to comply with the Endangered Species Act that is administered by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Since nuclear power plants do not produce appreciable gaseous effluents, the impact on air quality is minimal. Together, these regulations provide a measure of assurance that operations at VCSNS are conducted in a manner that protects the environment.

With respect to radiological releases, operators are required to monitor and sample the environment around the plant for any potential release of radionuclides and ensure that the allowable dose limits are not exceeded [Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 10, § 20.1301]. The NRC regulations also require the operators to report the quantity of each of the principles radionuclides released to unrestricted areas in liquid or gaseous effluents during the past six months of operations [Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 10, § 70.59]. This information for VCSNS is publicly available. Documents may be examined, and/or copied for a

fee, at the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR), located at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike (first floor), Rockville, Maryland. Publicly available records are accessible electronically from the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Public Electronic Reading Room on the Internet at the NRC Web site, <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. Persons who do not have access to ADAMS or who encounter problems in accessing the documents located in ADAMS, should contact the NRC PDR Reference staff by telephone at 1-800-397-4209 or 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to [pdr@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr@nrc.gov).

We regret that we cannot respond to your questions regarding any accident reports at an experimental power plant from the 1950s. We suggest that you contact the Office of Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of Energy at [www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov).

From the desk of . . . .  
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