

#245

March 2, 1961

Mr. James T. Ramey  
Executive Director  
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy  
Congress of the United States

Dear Mr. Ramey:

This letter is in reply to your inquiry of February 6, regarding the Peach Bottom reactor (HTGR) and is to inform you further of our plans for testing unclad fuel as discussed in our letter of February 2.

The recent review of Philadelphia Electric Company's application for a construction permit by the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards, and the conclusions resulting therefrom, were reported in a letter to Mr. McCone dated December 10, 1960. A copy of the letter is attached for your convenience. You will note that the Committee remains optimistic that a reactor of the general type proposed can be constructed and operated at the Peach Bottom site without undue risk to the health and safety of the public. However, in view of the many questions which remain to be answered by the research and development program, the Committee is not yet prepared to go beyond the original conclusion stated in its letter of March 14, 1960, and reiterated in the letter of December 10. Our Division of Licensing and Regulation concurs in the findings of the ACRS.

As Commissioner Wilson pointed out in his testimony before the Joint Committee in the 202 hearings, this may result in considerable delay in the project. Just how much cannot be forecast until we get more results from the extensive experimental program. General Dynamics has advised us that they expect to be able to present additional technical information on this project by early summer but whether on the basis of this information, the ACRS and the Commission will be justified in making favorable findings we cannot predict.

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The above change in schedule for the HIGR is not related to the decision to cancel construction of the Turret reactor experiment, nor are the problems basically similar. However, the decision to cancel the Turret experiment did take into account the fact that information on high temperature, contaminated systems will be gained from the HIGR fuel element test loop in the General Electric Test Reactor (GETR) as well as the contaminated loop (ORR-2) in the Oak Ridge Research Reactor and the EGCR loops.

Sincerely yours,

SIGNED, A. R. LUEDECKE

General Manager

Attachment

cy ltr to McCone fm ACRS,  
dtd Dec 10, 1960

SUBJECT  
DRD:DIR  
DRD  
CR  
Groelsema:rf  
Cong Lia (2)  
AGM:RID  
GM  
SECRETARIAT  
L&R ✓



Re-written: General Luedicke/Dr. Pittman - lm/H St