

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# Memorandum

*File*

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Henderson Ext

TO : Harold L. Price  
Director of Regulation

DATE: OCT 15 1965

FROM : *for* Lawrence D. Low, Director  
Division of Compliance

*L. Kornbl: D.V.*

SUBJECT: CURRENT SITUATION AT PEACH BOTTOM - PHILADELPHIA ELECTRIC COMPANY

*50-171*

The information below was obtained by our reactor inspectors during a recent inspection of the Peach Bottom plant. Although it has no safety significance, I feel that it will be of interest to you.

About ten days ago, some problems were encountered in the course of the prestartup tests that involved mechanical jamming of the fuel handling equipment. The jamming occurred during the hot tests of the equipment and presumably is a result of thermal effects. The equipment was removed from the reactor and sent off-site for investigation of the problem.

At this point, three courses of action are open to the Philadelphia Electric Company. The first is to load the reactor by hand and rebuild the fuel handling equipment on a leisurely time scale. It could then be tested out of the reactor in a presumably adequate manner and be ready by the time it is needed for refueling three years from now. The Experimental Gas Cooled Reactor has a core in which the loading problems would be similar to Peach Bottom and this core has been successfully loaded by hand. Therefore, this alternative seems to be a practical one. The second alternative is to fix the handling equipment as quickly as possible and proceed to loading the reactor. The third alternative is to fix the equipment and thoroughly test it under hot conditions before proceeding with the loading. We understand the third alternative to be the current choice of Philadelphia Electric Company. This will delay fuel loading until about December 28.

Because of the Commission's interests in this reactor, a member of the General Manager's staff has been participating in all of the discussions between Philadelphia Electric and its contractors in recent months. We understand that, as a result of the information obtained on this problem through this channel, the Chairman and Representative Holifield have talked to the Chairman of the Board of Philadelphia Electric Company and have offered any possible assistance to the Company.

(continued)



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Harold L. Price

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As I mentioned earlier, the alternative which Peach Bottom has selected appears to be the most conservative of the three. It does not have any adverse safety implications and does not require any action by the Regulatory Staff other than extension of the Construction Permit expiration date. I will inform you of any further developments.

cc: R. L. Doan, DRL  
S. Levine, DRL