

UCS Myths and Facts About The Dresden Water Leak

Myth	Fact
<i>Sampling of monitoring wells at Dresden "was discontinued in 1993."</i>	Absolutely Not True. Sampling of wells and other collection points has been continuous at Dresden since the station began operating and has never been stopped or suspended. Sampling of a limited number of wells ended in late 2003, but that involved only a quarter of the 96 wells and sample points in use at the site. Using language such as "reportedly discontinued" and "UCS has been told that ..." does not absolve the Union of Concerned Scientists from spreading inaccurate information.
<i>"Had the [June 27, 2004] earthquake not prompted a look, the leaks may have continued undetected for many years."</i>	Absolutely Not True. Dozens of other monitoring wells and locations around the site are monitored on a continuous schedule and would have picked up any leakage during 2004. The well where the leak was detected was sampled at the end of July as part of routine checks following the June 27 earthquake. Had the earthquake not occurred, the leak would have been detected in other scheduled checks over the next several months, probably as early as August.
<i>"The worst news is that Dresden's owners discontinued a sampling program in 1993 and the NRC allowed them to do it."</i>	Absolutely Not True. Again, Dresden has never discontinued its sampling program, which has received continuous oversight from the NRC since sampling began decades ago.
<i>"A pathway for radioactive water to reach the environment without being monitored or controlled" existed before the earthquake.</i>	Absolutely Not True. Between long-term storm-drain and well monitoring, all potential pathways were monitored and controlled.
<i>"No one knows when the ... piping began leaking" and "no one knows if the ground around Dresden was contaminated by radioactive water leaking from one spot for 11 years or from many spots for a shorter period."</i>	Absolutely Not True. Based on the size of the leak – which was very small, roughly in size to a trickle from a kitchen faucet – and the ongoing sampling program, the leak could not have begun before November 2003 and probably began somewhat later than that.
<i>Equipment problems compounded the leak.</i>	Absolutely Not True. Other than the pipe itself, there have been no equipment problems associated with the leak. UCS is referring to valves that were closed on either side of the leak when it was discovered. The valves functioned as designed and helped eliminate 95% of the leak a few days after it was discovered. Almost all of the remaining leakage was collected, treated and recycled into the plant. Any residual tritium water leakage will be eliminated by Oct. 19.
<i>"Consolidated Edison, the former owner of the Dresden nuclear station..."</i>	Absolutely Not True. Not to pile on in pointing out UCS inaccuracies, but Consolidated Edison, a New York utility, never owned Dresden. Dresden was built and operated by Commonwealth Edison of Chicago until 2000, when Exelon was formed.