

News Release

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Dresden Close to Finishing Pipe Replacement Project, Small Tritium Leak Poses No Environmental Risk

MORRIS, Ill. – Workers at the Dresden Generating Station in the next two weeks expect to finish replacing a 75-foot section of leaking underground water pipe.

The pipe carries water between the station's two reactors and large holding tanks outside the plant. The water contains tritium, a naturally occurring isotope of hydrogen that is found in most water and in more concentrated levels in water used in nuclear reactors. The leakage was largely confined to a small shallow area outside an adjoining plant building and has posed no environmental or safety threat, nor has it threatened drinking water.

The leakage was discovered Aug. 30 after samples taken from nearby monitoring wells showed higher than usual levels of tritium. Subsequent testing showed it was mostly confined to a small space (about 30 feet by 30 feet). A small amount made its way to a storm drain about 15 feet away from the leak. Measurements at the storm drain outflow showed concentrations that were less than half of the EPA drinking water limit. Any exposure from the leakage would be negligible – no more than 0.000215 millirem per year for someone standing at the edge of the plant property. A person receives 40 times more exposure from living with a home smoke detector.

After excavating near the monitoring wells, station personnel discovered the leak in a 24-inch pipe that passed under a 5,000-gallon liquid nitrogen tank. Rather than trying to move the tank or tunnel underneath it to get to and fix the leak, crews shut down the leaking pipe and began installation of a replacement section of pipe around the tank. Work is to be completed before the end of October.

Information about the leak and the pipe replacement was provided to appropriate state and federal agencies and internally to employees beginning at the time the leak was found in early September and continuing as the pipe replacement project has proceeded. The leak violated no regulations and no environmental limits were approached or exceeded.

Exelon Nuclear has hired an outside expert to independently confirm previous studies that assessed the natural movement of underground water, to assess locations of existing monitoring points and recommend possible locations for new wells to help ensure that the station's monitoring program remains effective.

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Earlier this week, the Washington-based Union of Concerned Scientists distributed a "fact sheet" erroneously stating that well monitoring at Dresden had ceased in 1993 and that the leak could have been ongoing for years. In fact, Dresden's monitoring program has been continuous for decades and has never been suspended or halted. Based on sampling schedules and other data, the leak – which was small – could not have existed before Nov. 2003 or gone undetected after August 2004.

Exelon Corporation is one of the nation's largest electric utilities with approximately five million customers and more than \$15 billion in annual revenues. The company has one of the industry's largest portfolios of electricity generation capacity, with a nationwide reach and strong positions in the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic. Exelon distributes electricity to approximately five million customers in Illinois and Pennsylvania and gas to 425,000 customers in the Philadelphia area. The company also has holdings in such competitive businesses as energy, infrastructure services and energy services. Exelon is headquartered in Chicago and trades on the NYSE under the ticker EXC.