

September 26, 2011

The Honorable Jim Gerlach  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Gerlach:

On behalf of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), I am responding to an August 23, 2011, email from Scott Savett of your staff. He forwarded a copy of August 15, 2011, correspondence to you from Dr. Lewis Cuthbert, President of the Alliance for a Clean Environment. Dr. Cuthbert is concerned with threats to the Schuylkill River as a drinking water source due to activities associated with operation of the Limerick Generating Station.

The NRC has requirements in place that limit the amount of radioactive discharge from nuclear power plants to the environment to assure public health and safety. NRC regulations also require all licensees to conduct a comprehensive program to sample the environment on a periodic basis. Environmental monitoring data for the Limerick Generating Station is publicly available on the NRC's web site through the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS). The 2010 Annual Radiological Environmental Monitoring Report can be viewed using accession number ML11126A169, and the 2010 Annual Radioactive Effluent Release Report can be viewed using accession number ML11126A168. During calendar year 2010, Limerick Generating Station performed 1133 analyses on 926 environmental samples, including samples of surface and drinking water, fish and river sediment, and air, milk, and vegetation. The analysis of these samples provided no evidence that routine releases of radioactive material at Limerick have had an adverse impact on the local environment or the quality of the drinking water. In addition, the quantities of radioactive materials released were found to be a very small percentage of the allowable discharge limits.

The NRC also conducts routine independent inspections of the Limerick effluent treatment/monitoring programs and the radiological environmental monitoring program. From these inspections, Limerick has been found to be in compliance with relevant requirements.

On June 22, 2011, Exelon Generation Company submitted an application to renew the licenses for Limerick Generating Station Units 1 and 2. That process, which generally takes approximately 30 months, will produce both a Safety Evaluation Report and an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed license renewal. Public participation is an important part of the license renewal process and there will be multiple opportunities for the public to be involved.

The NRC does not have authority over the actions of the Delaware River Basin Commission or the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Those organizations should be contacted directly to address Dr. Cuthbert's concerns regarding their activities. With regard to Schuylkill River flow, note that the Limerick facility does draw from the Delaware River as a supplemental water source when Schuylkill River flow is low.

J. Gerlach

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I appreciate the opportunity to provide the NRC's perspective on some of Dr. Cuthbert's concerns. If you have any questions, please contact me or Ms. Rebecca Schmidt, Director of the Office of Congressional Affairs, at (301) 415-1776.

Sincerely,

***/RA by Martin J. Virgilio for/***

R. W. Borchardt  
Executive Director  
for Operations

J. Gerlach

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