



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

REGION III
2443 WARRENVILLE RD. SUITE 210
LISLE, IL 60532-4352

August 30, 2017

Mr. Chuck Galbraith
[HOME ADDRESS DELETED
UNDER PRIVACY ACT]

Dear Mr. Galbraith,

Our staff have recently received a number of phone calls and had a number of conversations with you regarding your concerns about tritium releases from the Braidwood nuclear plant. We appreciate the opportunity to discuss your tritium concerns and would like to offer you a summary of the information shared during our conversations regarding how the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulates radioactive releases from nuclear plants to ensure they do not have a negative impact on the people living near these plants or the environment.

First and foremost, the NRC is charged with regulating the use of radioactive materials to protect the health and safety of the public, ensure the common defense and security, and protect the environment at all commercial nuclear power plants in the United States, including the Braidwood plant. We are an independent regulatory agency within the U.S. Federal Government with the sole focus on ensuring the safe operation of Braidwood and other U.S. commercial nuclear plants; none of which we own or operate. We ensure this safety through a robust inspection program in which thousands of hours of inspection are conducted every year by technically trained experts in all areas of plant performance, including radiation protection and environmental monitoring.

Over the past few weeks, we have received a number of messages on the telephone answering machine for the NRC resident inspectors at the Braidwood plant and a recording when you talked to a Headquarters Operations Officer and through which you relayed a number of concerns about tritium leaks at Braidwood. After receiving these messages, you spoke to a number of our staff who work for the NRC and are not affiliated with the Braidwood plant. These NRC staff include resident inspectors who are stationed at Braidwood conducting independent inspections; staff in our local office in Lisle, Illinois, who specialize in the monitoring of radioactive releases and radiation protection; staff in Lisle who interact with other state agencies including the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency; public affairs officers in Lisle who are dedicated to responding to inquiries from the public; and staff in our headquarters office in Rockville, Maryland.

Through these conversations, we have provided the following specific information in response to your concerns regarding the radiological consequences associated with tritium and the offsite identification of tritium originating from the Braidwood plant.

The NRC has strict limits for radioactive releases from nuclear power plants based on international scientific standards. These limits have not been exceeded for tritium or other radioactive materials at Braidwood. This conclusion is based on regular independent inspections at Braidwood to ensure that the site continues to adhere to the NRC's federally-mandated regulatory limits. Samples of water, vegetation, milk and other parts of the environment nearby are regularly collected to determine if radioactive releases from the plant have resulted in increased radiation levels. Independent verification and review of these test results by NRC inspectors have demonstrated that the Braidwood plant has not violated NRC regulatory limits or had an adverse impact on the environment.

Your additional concerns, including those associated with the contamination of property and the impact on the health of the community, are beyond the NRC's jurisdiction to address. As we shared during previous conversations, these issues fall under the jurisdiction of the Illinois Department of Health and the point of contact at this agency, Kelly Horn, can be reached at 217-558-5135.

We believe that through this letter we have addressed the concerns you have shared with us regarding tritium releases from Braidwood. If you have any new information or concerns, please contact me at 630-829-9620 at my office in Lisle and I would be happy to discuss them with you.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Eric Duncan
Branch Chief, Braidwood Station
Division of Reactor Projects
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

Letter to Chuck Galbraith from Eric Duncan dated August 30, 2017

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