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June 10, 1985



VIRGINIA POWER

CERTIFIED MAIL  
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. K. C. Das  
Regional Director  
State Water Control Board  
Piedmont Regional Office  
2201 West Broad Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23230

Surry Power Station - Oil Spill

Dear Mr. Das:

This is to confirm the recent oil spill at our Surry Power Station that was previously reported by telephone to the Staff of the State Water Control Board on the evening of June 5, 1985.

On the evening of June 5, station personnel observed a light sheen of oil in the upper section of the station's cooling water discharge canal. The sheen was described as a few square feet in size, and quantity was estimated by station personnel as less than one eighth cup of oil. A heavy rainfall occurred that evening and this spill was apparently related to surface runoff due to this rainfall. Station equipment was checked to determine if a malfunction had occurred which might have caused the spill, and no source of oil from station equipment could be found. A cleanup crew assigned to control and clean up the spill observed that during the rain, a small amount of oil was coming from a storm drain. This same drain had been involved in a minor spill reported on the evening of May 29, 1985.

Investigations have indicated that oil has apparently been entering this drain through a catch basin located in a graveled yard area in which four pieces of mechanical equipment are parked. Although no oil soaked areas of gravel could be found, there has apparently been some past drippage which has contaminated some of the gravel and storm drain with oil.

Station personnel have used oil sorbent materials to clean up the spill, and had placed sorbent pillows in the storm drain following the May 29 spill. We have now also used sorbent materials to construct a floating boom, and have now placed this boom around the end of this storm drain. In addition, a permanent floating boom is located near the lower end of the discharge canal to prevent any oil from reaching the James River, and action has been taken to more positively secure other possible routes of oil contamination.

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Discussions with the U. S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office in Norfolk and Mr. Ray Jenkins of your staff have indicated that while they consider oil spills a serious matter, they may take into consideration the circumstances surrounding a spill, particularly when positive action is taken to remediate a problem. Accordingly, they have indicated it is understood that this type of surface runoff is extremely difficult to control. They have agreed that if this runoff is largely contained by the sorbent boom to the area of the storm drain outfall and efforts to clean up further runoff continue, then reporting for this situation will not be required for a reasonable time. It is recognized by all parties that oil contamination should eventually flush out of this drain system, and that should it continue for more than 30 days from the date of this past spill, renewed efforts to pinpoint the source will begin and reporting procedures will again be initiated. Any spills from sources other than rain runoff or of substantial quantities will be reported during this period.

We greatly appreciate your concern and assistance in this matter, and will continue our efforts towards control of this problem. Due to the very small amounts of oil involved, no apparent adverse environmental impact to state waters, wildlife, public or private property occurred. No oil has been observed to reach the James River. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Very truly yours,

John A. Taylor, Ph.D.  
Manager  
Water Quality

cc: U. S. Coast Guard  
Dr. J. Nelson Grace, USNRC Docket No. 50-280/50-281  
✓ Mr. Harold R. Denton, USNRC Docket No. 50-280/50-281  
Mr. Donald J. Burke, USNRC Docket No. 50-280/50-281