



**GULF STATES UTILITIES COMPANY**

RIVER BEND STATION POST OFFICE BOX 220 ST. FRANCISVILLE, LOUISIANA 70775  
AREA CODE 504 635-6094 348-8681

September 22, 1988  
RBG- 28874  
File Nos. G1.11.2, G1.11.7

Ms. Maureen O'Neill, Assistant Secretary  
Office of Water Resources  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Post Office Box 44091, Capitol Station  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4091

Dear Ms. O'Neill:

Water Discharge Permit No. WP0409  
NPDES Permit No. LA0042731  
River Bend Station - Unit 1

On the evening of September 17, 1988, a sample from Outfall 001, cooling tower blowdown, indicated a pH of 3.1 SU, whereas the established effluent limitations for this characteristic are 6.0 to 9.0 SU. At the time of this sample, discharge had been suspended because measurements of plant circulating water upstream of the outfall indicated pH problems. The value reported here appears to represent a lower extreme from a period of less than three (3) hours during which the blowdown pH could have been below 6.0 SU. When Outfall 001 discharge was resumed on the morning of September 18, 1988, its pH was 6.9 SU.

The excursion resulted in release to the Mississippi River of about 350,000 gallons of water with pH between 3.1 and 6.0 SU. Considering the large volume and buffering capacity of the river, no adverse environmental impact is likely to have occurred.

The cause of the excursion was pumping of sulfuric acid-contaminated rainwater into the plant circulating water flume. Rainwater related to Hurricane Gilbert had accumulated in an acid tank spill containment and was being removed to restore adequate containment volume. Minor leaks of acid were known to have lowered the pH of the rainwater, hence precluding its direct release to storm sewers, but problems were not anticipated with gradual transfer to the flume. Subsequent equipment problems led to use of a much higher-capacity transfer pump than was originally intended. This resulted in transferring the acidified rainwater to the flume at a rate which exceeded the buffering capacity of the flume water.

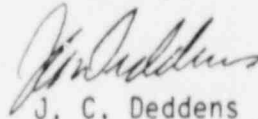
When the impact on flume pH was recognized, blowdown of circulating water via Outfall 001 was immediately stopped. The acid leaks are being repaired. To prevent recurrence of such problems, more stringent controls have been added to the procedure for emptying spill containments and warning signs have been posted at appropriate facilities. These measures provide for more control by chemistry or environmental personnel, including allowable transfer rates and signature authorization.

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I certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the person or persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information submitted, the information submitted is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

Sincerely,



J. C. Deddens  
Senior Vice President  
River Bend Nuclear Group

JCD/JEB/LAE/RJK/JVC/JWC/ch

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