

PECO NUCLEAR

A Unit of PECO Energy

PECO Energy Company
965 Chesterbrook Boulevard
Wayne, PA 19087-5691

May 2, 1997

Docket Nos. 50-277
50-278

License Nos. DPR-44
DPR-56

NPDES Permit No. PA0009733

U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
ATTN: Document Control Desk
Washington, DC 20555

SUBJECT: Peach Bottom Atomic Power Station, Units 2 and 3
Changes to National Pollutant Discharge
Elimination System Permit

Gentlemen:

This letter is being submitted to inform you of a variance to the PBAPS National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit concerning cooling tower operation.

By letter dated April 2, 1997, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP) granted a temporary variance of the cooling tower operation matrix (table 1) contained in the current NPDES permit, pending issuance of a permit amendment. The potential environmental impact of this variance is based upon the results of a 1996 study which concluded that the integrity of a balanced, indigenous fish community in Conowingo Pond can be maintained at zero tower operation.

PECO recognizes the concerns with regards to the conditions studied in 1996 (unseasonably high river flows and cool temperatures), and that operational changes should not pose undue biological risks over the long term. PECO has therefore submitted a long-term monitoring program for the Conowingo Pond with zero cooling tower operations. This PA DEP variance allows for this three year study of zero tower operations.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,

G. A. Hunger, Jr.

G. A. Hunger, Jr.,
Director - Licensing

cc: H. J. Miller, Administrator, Region I, USNRC
W. L. Schmidt, USNRC Senior Resident Inspector, PBAPS

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