

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

January 7, 2011

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

VIA E-MAIL AND FEDERAL EXPRESS

Mr. Charles Huling, Vice President, Environmental Affairs
Georgia Power
241 Ralph McGill Blvd., N.E. 22nd Floor, bin 10221
Atlanta, Georgia 30308-3374

Dear Mr. Huling,

On May 12, 2010 the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") and its engineering contractors conducted a coal combustion residual (CCR) site assessment at the Plant Scherer Station. The purpose of this visit was to assess the structural stability of the impoundments or other similar management units that contain "wet" handled CCRs. We thank you and your staff for your cooperation during the site visit. Subsequent to the site visit, EPA sent you a copy of the draft report evaluating the structural stability of the units at the Plant Scherer Station and requested that you submit comments on the factual accuracy of the draft report to EPA. Your comments were considered in the preparation of the final report.

The final report for the Plant Scherer Station is enclosed. This report includes a specific rating for each CCR management unit and recommendations and actions that our engineering contractors believe should be undertaken to ensure the stability of the CCR impoundment(s) located at the Plant Scherer Station. These recommendations are listed in Enclosure 2.

Since these recommendations relate to actions which could affect the structural stability of the CCR management units and, therefore, protection of human health and the environment, EPA believes their implementation should receive the highest priority. Therefore, we request that you inform us on how you intend to address each of the recommendations found in the final report. Your response should include specific plans and schedules for implementing each of the recommendations. If you will not implement a recommendation, please explain why. Please provide a response to this request by February 7, 2011. Please send your response to:

Mr. Stephen Hoffman
US Environmental Protection Agency (5304P)
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

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If you are using overnight or hand delivery mail, please use the following address:

Mr. Stephen Hoffman
US Environmental Protection Agency
Two Potomac Yard
2733 S. Crystal Drive
5th Floor, N-237
Arlington, VA 22202-2733

You may also provide a response by e-mail to hoffman.stephen@epa.gov

You may assert a business confidentiality claim covering all or part of the information requested, in the manner described by 40 C. F. R. Part 2, Subpart B. Information covered by such a claim will be disclosed by EPA only to the extent and only by means of the procedures set forth in 40 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart B. If no such claim accompanies the information when EPA receives it, the information may be made available to the public by EPA without further notice to you. If you wish EPA to treat any of your response as “confidential” you must so advise EPA when you submit your response.

EPA will be closely monitoring your progress in implementing the recommendations from these reports and could decide to take additional action if the circumstances warrant.

You should be aware that EPA will be posting the report for this facility on the Agency website shortly.

Given that the site visit related solely to structural stability of the management units, this report and its conclusions in no way relate to compliance with RCRA, CWA, or any other environmental law and are not intended to convey any position related to statutory or regulatory compliance.

Please be advised that providing false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements of representation may subject you to criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Mr. Hoffman in the Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery at (703) 308-8413. Thank you for your continued ongoing efforts to ensure protection of human health and the environment.

Sincerely,
/Suzanne Rudzinski/, Director
Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery

Enclosures

Enclosure 2
Plant Scherer Station Recommendations

4.2 Hydrologic and Hydraulic Recommendations

June 2010 Draft Report. AMEC recommended that Georgia Power determine what rainfall event the Ash and Settling Ponds are capable of safely containing or passing. A more complete evaluation would determine the effect of the PMP rainfall event on the Ash Pond and the Plant Scherer site. The analyses should include evaluation of Lake Juliette's ability to safely contain or pass the design storm event.

During the site visit, the hazard potential was evaluated to be "significant hazard" because failure of the dam could result in damage to public roads and environmental damage, but would be unlikely to cause loss of human life. There are residences nearby, to the north of the dam, along Luther Smith Road; the nearest residence is about 800 feet from the dam. Due to the thickness of the wooded terrain and the presence of a deep defile between the dam and the homes, the potential for loss of human life was assessed as being unlikely. In AMEC's opinion, it would be prudent to perform a dam breach analyses to evaluate the potential for a dam failure to inundate these homes.

Final Report. Based upon additional information provided by Georgia Power on September 21, 2010 (SCH-API 043), in AMEC's opinion, the analyses that were provided address the ability of the both impoundments to safely control or pass appropriate storm events.

4.3 Geotechnical and Stability Recommendations

June 2010 Draft Report. SCH-API 025 discusses soil strength parameters of foundation soil only. Embankment soil strength parameters are shown in SCH-API 026 and 027, but their genesis is not provided. AMEC recommends that clarification of how the engineering soil strength parameters for the embankment soil were determined be provided. AMEC recommends that the stability analyses include design storm peak/surcharge stage water levels that reflect appropriate phreatic surfaces due to pre-saturation by appropriate antecedent precipitation and the limited outflow capacity of the pond. Likewise, the stability analyses should consider all critical stages during the life of the facility, such as maximum pool area and any potential surcharges, as well as likely loading combinations. Furthermore, the previous analyses limit the failure surfaces to circular surfaces; AMEC recommends that the slope stability analyses include slip surface optimization to allow for noncircular failure surfaces.

Final Report. Based upon additional information provided by Georgia Power on September 21, 2010 (SCH-API 040), in AMEC's opinion, the information provided adequately documents the soil strength parameters and the analyses address the stability of both impoundments under the noted load cases.

4.4 Monitoring Instrumentation

AMEC has reviewed provided information and records and determined that Georgia Power has adequate instrument monitoring and review practices. We recommend that Plant Scherer continue the current instrument monitoring and review practices.

4.5 Inspection Recommendations

AMEC has reviewed provided information and inspection records and determined that Georgia Power has adequate inspection practices. We recommend that Plant Scherer continue the current inspection program and practices.