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August 26, 2005

The Honorable Samuel W. Bodman
Secretary
U. S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Bodman:

I am writing to alert you to our concerns regarding the reliability of electricity service for the Nation's Capital in light of the recent shutdown of the Potomac River Generating Station in Alexandria, Virginia. The plant shutdown has removed a redundancy which is critical to assuring the reliable supply of electricity. Accordingly, we believe that immediate resumption of plant operations, in a manner that balances environmental and electricity reliability concerns, is critical to ensuring reliable electric service to the Nation's Capital.

The Potomac River plant has five generating units connected to the local distribution system that serves critical federal departments and agencies, Foggy Bottom, and Georgetown. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ) informed the Mirant Corporation, the plant's owner, on August 19 of its "cursory review" of an independent study raising concern about the Potomac River plant's air emissions. The VDEQ requested Mirant to "undertake such action as is necessary to ensure protection of human health and the environment, in the area surrounding the plant, including the potential reduction of levels of operation, or potential shut down of the facility." Mirant ceased generating electricity at the plant on August 24, and has not set a date to resume operations.

It is important for you to know that the PJM Interconnection, which operates the transmission grid in our region, recently released an analysis of the reliability of the National Capital area's electric service in light of the potential Potomac River plant shutdown. PJM concluded that the shutdown would significantly erode the electric reliability for our area, particularly if we see increased electricity demand from temperatures exceeding 90 degrees. Out of concern for reliability of electricity service, the District of Columbia Public Service Commission has filed an emergency complaint with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission asking it to "requir[e] the operation" of the Potomac River plant.

We believe the plant can and should be operated in the immediate term in a manner that balances environmental and electric reliability concerns. Until the plant resumes operations, the ability to maintain reliable electric service to the Nation's Capital will remain significantly compromised.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please feel free to contact Beverly Perry of my staff at (202) 872-2373.

Sincerely,

Dennis R. Wraase

CC: Kevin Kolevar
Robert G. Burnley, VDEQ
Lisa Johnson, Mirant