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DOE Orders Mirant Power Plant to Operate Under Limited Circumstances

DOE finds emergency; determines plant will help electric reliability

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman today [issued an order](#) requiring Mirant Corporation’s Potomac River Generating Station in Alexandria, Virginia (Mirant) to immediately resume limited operation. The order will help provide electric reliability for Washington, D.C., and will do so at the lowest reasonable impact to the environment.

“After weighing all of the information, I believe an emergency situation exists, and that issuance of this order is in the public interest. This order will provide the level of electricity reliability necessary to keep Washingtonians safe and our national government running, while minimizing any environmental impact from the power station,” Secretary Bodman said. “We will continue to monitor the electricity infrastructure of the D.C. area and make changes to the order if and when they are necessary.”

The Mirant plant is one of only three sources of electricity that serve the central business district of Washington, D.C., as well as many federal institutions, the Georgetown area, other portions of Northwest, D.C., and the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority’s Blue Plains Advanced Water Treatment Plant – the largest wastewater treatment plant in the world. The other sources of electricity are two high voltage transmission lines that deliver electricity from other generating sources. If the Mirant plant is not operational, an outage of the high voltage transmission lines could cause a blackout in the central District of Columbia area lasting hours or even days.

The Secretary’s order specifically requires the plant to operate in two limited circumstances: in the event of a necessary planned outage of one of the two main transmission lines; and in the event of an unplanned outage of one or both of the transmission lines. To be ready to respond to an unplanned outage, Mirant is required to maintain operation of its plant at the maximum level of feasible readiness, as determined by DOE after consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, without

exceeding air quality standards.

Secretary Bodman's order, issued pursuant to section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act, is in response to a request for an emergency order to restart the Mirant plant that was filed by the District of Columbia Public Service Commission (DCPSC) on August 24, 2005. That request from the DCPSC came after a series of events that led to Mirant closing its plant in Alexandria, VA.

The Secretary's order is effective immediately and will expire on September 30, 2006, or at such other time as the Secretary may direct.

Additional copies of the order are available at <http://www.electricity.doe.gov>

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.