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Pepco and the District Agree on Environmental Investigation and Cleanup Study at Benning Road Facility
Consent Decree Filed Regarding Pepco's Benning Road Property

WASHINGTON – The District of Columbia Department of the Environment (DDOE) announced today that it has entered into a Consent Decree with Pepco Energy Services Inc. (PES) and Potomac Electric Power Co. (Pepco), under which Pepco and PES have committed to launch an environmental investigation and cleanup study of Pepco's Benning Road facility. Under the Consent Decree, filed in Federal District Court yesterday, Pepco will investigate the facility and adjacent portions of the Anacostia River to determine if historical Benning Road facility operations have contributed to contamination of the Anacostia River sediments and if so, what – if any –additional response actions should be taken.

Pepco and PES are cooperating fully with DDOE in this matter and support the District's efforts to protect the Anacostia River, a valuable resource for the District of Columbia and its residents. Pepco's Benning Road facility is one of six publicly and privately owned sites along the Anacostia that DDOE has identified as potential sources of pollutants impacting the river.

"I applaud the parties for swiftly bringing their negotiations to closure, and committing their resources towards fixing the problem," said Mayor Vincent C. Gray. "It is simply unacceptable that the Anacostia River is one of the ten most polluted in the country. I expect that this settlement will inspire others to follow Pepco's example, and do their part in returning this important asset to the community."

The Benning Road facility has been in operation since 1906, providing electric generation, transmission and distribution services to residents, businesses and government entities in the greater metropolitan Washington area. The electric generating station at Benning Road has been managed by Pepco Energy Services as an intermittent, peak demand electric plant since 2000.

"Compliance with environmental and safety requirements is a top priority for all Pepco and PES employees," said Wesley L. McNealy, director of environmental services. "We are committed to full compliance with environmental laws and regulations with respect to all of the operations at our Benning Road facility. Today's agreement is indicative of the common goals and spirit of cooperation on environmental stewardship shared by Pepco and the District of Columbia Government."

Thomas H. Graham, Pepco region president, added, "We are committed to the health and safety of our customers, our employees and the community we serve, and we are proud of our employees' continual pursuit of operational excellence at the Benning Road facility." According to Graham, Pepco intends to study carefully the impact of past industrial practices and will do its share to improve the environmental quality of the Anacostia River. "As we begin our investigation," Graham said, "we remain committed to open dialogue with neighbors, customers and other stakeholders and will keep the public informed regarding this very important issue."

Acknowledging the significance of the agreement, Acting Attorney General Irvin B Nathan said, “This settlement, achieved in record time, sends a strong message that we value the River and that we intend to work vigorously to address any harmful impacts to this precious resource. We thank PEPCO for supporting the District’s efforts to improve the health of the River.”

DDOE Director Christophe A.G. Tulou, agreed, stating, “This settlement is an essential component in our strategy to restore the Anacostia River to its full vitality. This is the fourth site where we will have transparent, enforceable commitments to improve the Anacostia. We look forward to additional successes at additional sites.”

The Consent Decree will be made available for a 30-day public comment period. At the conclusion of the public comment period, the parties will evaluate all comments received, and then move to enter the Consent Decree as a Final Court Order. To view the Consent Decree, visit www.ddoe.dc.gov.