

No. 93-158  
Tel. 301-504-2240

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
(Wednesday, October 20, 1993)

NRC STAFF ISSUES LICENSE FOR STORAGE OF SPENT FUEL  
AT MINNESOTA NUCLEAR PLANT IN INDEPENDENT FACILITY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has issued a license authorizing Northern States Power Company to store spent nuclear fuel from its Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant in an independent spent fuel storage installation.

The facility, which is being built on the Prairie Island site near Red Wing, Minnesota, about 28 miles southeast of Minneapolis, can be used only to store spent fuel from the Prairie Island plant. No offsite transportation of spent fuel is involved.

The license authorizes Northern States to move spent fuel from the Prairie Island power plant--after being stored in the spent fuel pool inside the reactor building for at least 10 years --to the nearby independent spent fuel storage installation. The spent fuel will be stored in up to 48 TN-40 dry storage casks manufactured by Transnuclear Inc. and approved by the NRC for use at Prairie Island. However, additional approvals are needed from the State of Minnesota.

Northern States submitted an application to the NRC on August 31, 1990, to receive and store spent fuel in the independent spent fuel storage installation. A notice of opportunity for a public hearing on the application was published by the NRC on October 19, 1990. The Minnesota Department of Public Service, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board and Prairie Island Mdewakanton Sioux Indian Community petitioned to intervene in a hearing. They withdrew their petitions after reaching an agreement with the utility and the NRC providing for a full and open exchange of information concerning potential radiological health effects and a reasonable opportunity for the petitioners to present their views in a timely manner to the NRC staff before the staff makes a final recommendation or determination on the requested license.

The NRC staff reviewed all relevant health and safety aspects of the design, including criticality, structural, thermal and shielding considerations, under both normal and accident conditions. The staff concluded, based on a safety evaluation

report and an environmental assessment, that there is reasonable assurance that the Prairie Island independent spent fuel storage installation can be constructed and operated without endangering the health and safety of the public, without significant environmental impact and in compliance with the conditions of the license and the Commission's regulations.

#