

March 18, 1998

Mr. Roger O. Anderson, Director
Licensing and Management Issues
Northern State Power Company
414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55401

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENT TO
FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE, PROPOSED NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS
CONSIDERATION AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING - MONTICELLO
NUCLEAR GENERATING PLANT (TAC NO. MA1219)

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Enclosed is a copy of the subject notice that relates to Northern States Power Company's application for amendment for Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, dated March 13, 1998.

The proposed amendment would revise Section 2.1.A of the Technical Specifications (TS), Appendix A of the Operating License for the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, to change the safety limit minimum critical power ratio (SLMCPR) values from 1.08 to 1.10 for two recirculation pump operation, and from 1.09 to 1.11 for single loop operation. The amendment would also revise pages 6 and 249b of the TS to indicate that the revised SLMCPR values are applicable only to operating cycle 19.

The notice has been forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Tae Kim, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate III-1
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-263
Enclosure: Notice
cc w/encl: See next page

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Mr. Roger O. Anderson, Director
Northern States Power Company

Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant

cc:

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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
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Plant Manager
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Monticello, Minnesota 55362-9637

Robert Nelson, President
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St. Paul, Minnesota 55119

Commissioner
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
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St. Paul, Minnesota 55119

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Commissioner of Health
Minnesota Department of Health
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Darla Groshens, Auditor/Treasurer
Wright County Government Center
10 NW Second Street
Buffalo, Minnesota 55313

UNITED STATES NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSIONNORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANYDOCKET NO. 50-263NOTICE OF CONSIDERATION OF ISSUANCE OF AMENDMENT TOFACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NO. DPR-22PROPOSED NO SIGNIFICANT HAZARDSCONSIDERATION DETERMINATION, AND OPPORTUNITY FOR A HEARING

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) is considering issuance of an amendment to Facility Operating License No. DPR-22 issued to Northern States Power Company (the licensee) for operation of the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, Unit 1, located in Wright County, Minnesota.

The proposed amendment would revise Section 2.1.A of the Technical Specifications (TS), Appendix A of the Operating License for the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant, to change the safety limit minimum critical power ratio (SLMCPR) values from 1.08 to 1.10 for two recirculation pump operation, and from 1.09 to 1.11 for single loop operation. The amendment would also revise pages 6 and 249b of the TS to indicate that the revised SLMCPR values are applicable only to operating cycle 19.

Before issuance of the proposed license amendment, the Commission will have made findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (the Act) and the Commission's regulations.

The Commission has made a proposed determination that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration. Under the Commission's regulations in 10 CFR 50.92, this means that operation of the facility in accordance with the proposed amendment

would not (1) involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated; or (2) create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously evaluated; or (3) involve a significant reduction in a margin of safety. As required by 10 CFR 50.91(a), the licensee has provided its analysis of the issue of no significant hazards consideration, which is presented below:

1. The proposed amendment will not involve a significant increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

SLMCPR [safety limit minimum critical power ratio] calculations are based on ensuring that greater than 99.9% of all fuel rods in the core avoid transition boiling if the limit is not violated. Proposed SLMCPRs preserve existing margin to transition boiling and fuel damage in the event of a postulated transient. Fuel licensing acceptance criteria for SLMCPR calculations apply to Monticello Cycle 19 in the same manner as previously applied. The probability of fuel damage is not increased.

Therefore, the proposed TS [technical specification] changes do not involve an increase in the probability or consequences of an accident previously evaluated.

2. The proposed amendment will not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident from any accident previously analyzed.

SLMCPR is a TS numerical value designed to ensure that transition boiling does not occur in 99.9% of all fuel rods in the core during the limiting postulated transient. A change in SLMCPR cannot create the possibility of any new type of accident. SLMCPR values for the new fuel cycle are calculated using previously transmitted methodology. Additionally, the Operating Limit MCPR [minimum critical power ratio] value for the QFAs [qualification fuel assemblies] in the core monitoring computer databank will be increased by 0.02 to ensure that the prior SPC [Siemens Power Corporation] review results are bounded.

Therefore, the proposed TS changes do not create the possibility of a new or different kind of accident, from any accident previously evaluated.

3. The proposed amendment will not involve a significant reduction in the margin of safety.

Fuel licensing acceptance criteria for SLMCPR calculations apply to Monticello Cycle 19 in the same manner as previously applied. SLMCPRs prepared by GE [General Electric] using methodology previously transmitted to the NRC ensure that greater than 99.9% of all fuel rods in the core will avoid transition boiling if the limit is not violated, thereby preserving fuel cladding integrity.

Therefore, the proposed TS changes do not involve a reduction in a margin of safety.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's analysis and, based on this review, it appears that the three standards of 10 CFR 50.92(c) are satisfied. Therefore, the NRC staff proposes to determine that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration.

The Commission is seeking public comments on this proposed determination. Any comments received by close of business within 30 days after the date of publication of this notice will be considered in making any final determination.

Normally, the Commission will not issue the amendment until the expiration of the 30-day notice period. However, should circumstances change during the notice period such that failure to act in a timely way would result, for example, in derating or shutdown of the facility, the Commission may issue the license amendment before the expiration of the 30-day notice period, provided that its final determination is that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will consider all public and State comments received. Should the Commission take this action, it will publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER a notice of issuance and provide for opportunity for a hearing after issuance. The Commission expects that the need to take this action will occur very infrequently.

Written comments may be submitted by mail to the Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and should cite the publication date and page number of this FEDERAL REGISTER notice. Written comments may also be delivered to Room 6D59, Two White Flint North, 11545 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays. Copies of written comments received may be examined at the NRC Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC.

The filing of requests for hearing and petitions for leave to intervene is discussed below.

By April 20, 1998, the licensee may file a request for a hearing with respect to issuance of the amendment to the subject facility operating license and any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding and who wishes to participate as a party in the proceeding must file a written request for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene. Requests for a hearing and a petition for leave to intervene shall be filed in accordance with the Commission's "Rules of Practice for Domestic Licensing Proceedings" in 10 CFR Part 2. Interested persons should consult a current copy of 10 CFR 2.714 which is available at the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Minneapolis Public Library, Technology and Science Department, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401. If a request for a hearing or petition for leave to intervene is filed by the above date, the Commission or an Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, designated by the Commission or by the Chairman of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel, will rule on the request and/or petition; and the Secretary or the designated Atomic Safety and Licensing Board will issue a notice of hearing or an appropriate order.

As required by 10 CFR 2.714, a petition for leave to intervene shall set forth with particularity the interest of the petitioner in the proceeding, and how that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding. The petition should specifically explain the reasons why intervention should be permitted with particular reference to the following factors: (1) the nature of the petitioner's right under the Act to be made party to the proceeding; (2) the nature and extent of the petitioner's property, financial, or other interest in the proceeding; and (3) the possible effect of any order which may be entered in the proceeding on the petitioner's interest. The petition should also identify the specific aspect(s) of the subject matter of the proceeding as

to which petitioner wishes to intervene. Any person who has filed a petition for leave to intervene or who has been admitted as a party may amend the petition without requesting leave of the Board up to 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, but such an amended petition must satisfy the specificity requirements described above.

Not later than 15 days prior to the first prehearing conference scheduled in the proceeding, a petitioner shall file a supplement to the petition to intervene which must include a list of the contentions which are sought to be litigated in the matter. Each contention must consist of a specific statement of the issue of law or fact to be raised or controverted. In addition, the petitioner shall provide a brief explanation of the bases of the contention and a concise statement of the alleged facts or expert opinion which support the contention and on which the petitioner intends to rely in proving the contention at the hearing. The petitioner must also provide references to those specific sources and documents of which the petitioner is aware and on which the petitioner intends to rely to establish those facts or expert opinion. Petitioner must provide sufficient information to show that a genuine dispute exists with the applicant on a material issue of law or fact. Contentions shall be limited to matters within the scope of the amendment under consideration. The contention must be one which, if proven, would entitle the petitioner to relief. A petitioner who fails to file such a supplement which satisfies these requirements with respect to at least one contention will not be permitted to participate as a party.

Those permitted to intervene become parties to the proceeding, subject to any limitations in the order granting leave to intervene, and have the opportunity to participate fully in the conduct of the hearing, including the opportunity to present evidence and cross-examine witnesses.

If a hearing is requested, the Commission will make a final determination on the issue of no significant hazards consideration. The final determination will serve to decide when the hearing is held.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves no significant hazards consideration, the Commission may issue the amendment and make it immediately effective, notwithstanding the request for a hearing. Any hearing held would take place after issuance of the amendment.

If the final determination is that the amendment request involves a significant hazards consideration, any hearing held would take place before the issuance of any amendment.

A request for a hearing or a petition for leave to intervene must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff, or may be delivered to the Commission's Public Document Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, by close of business on the above date. A copy of the petition should also be sent to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and to Jay Silberg, Esq., Shaw, Pittman, Potts, and Trowbridge, 2300 N Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037, attorney for the licensee.

Nontimely filings of petitions for leave to intervene, amended petitions, supplemental petitions and/or requests for hearing will not be entertained absent a determination by the Commission, the presiding officer or the presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that the petition and/or request should be granted based upon a balancing of the factors specified in 10 CFR 2.714(a)(1)(i)-(v) and 2.714(d).

For further details with respect to this action, see the application for amendment dated March 13, 1998, which is available for public inspection at the Commission's Public Document

Room, the Gelman Building, 2120 L Street, NW., Washington, DC, and at the local public document room located at the Minneapolis Public Library, Technology and Science Department, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 18th day of March 1998.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



Tae Kim, Senior Project Manager
Project Directorate III-1
Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation