



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

JUN 07 2004

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

B-19J

James Holthaus
Nuclear Management Company
Environmental Project Manager
2807 W County Road 75
Monticello, MN 55362

RE: Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant License Renewal

Dear Mr. Holthaus:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has received the letter from Nuclear Management Company (NMC) and Excel Energy regarding the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant (MNGP), dated April 28, 2004, which requests the Agency's participation in the plant's environmental review for license renewal. Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), license renewal is a federal action which requires stakeholder involvement and an evaluation of the project's environmental impacts. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is the lead federal agency for the MNGP license renewal and will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project.

We appreciate the offer to participate in the early stages of the environmental review, but respectfully defer. Our involvement in the license renewal process generally occurs in coordination with the NRC directly, since we are not the lead federal agency. From discussions with the NRC, we understand that MNGP expects to submit a license renewal application in April 2005. The NRC's anticipated time frame for a draft EIS is late 2005 or early 2006. In accordance with NEPA, the NRC provides draft and final EIS documents for U.S. EPA's review. We have recently coordinated with the NRC on other nuclear power plants during the EIS scoping stage. U.S. EPA staff, along with staff from other federal agencies, accompanied the NRC on plant visits and attended initial public meetings for license renewal. We expect to follow a similar course for the MNGP and anticipate that the NRC will request our involvement in the middle of 2005. We are confident that this approach will allow for timely identification and resolution of potential issues.

For your assistance, we have enclosed two recent comment letters regarding draft EIS documents for license renewals for the Quad Cities and Dresden power plants. These may be useful in preparing the MNGP's environmental documents. If you have any further questions, please contact Anna Miller of my staff at (312) 886-7060 or miller.anna@epa.gov.

Sincerely,


Jerri-Anne Garl, Director
Office of Strategic Environmental Analysis

cc: John Tappert, P.E., NRC