

June 30, 2005

Mr. Craig Czarnecki
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
East Lansing Field Office
2651 Coolidge Road, Suite 101
East Lansing, MI 48823

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LIST OF PROTECTED SPECIES WITHIN THE AREA UNDER
EVALUATION FOR THE PALISADES NUCLEAR PLANT LICENSE RENEWAL

Dear Mr. Czarnecki:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is reviewing an application submitted by Nuclear Management Company, LLC (NMC) for the renewal of the operating license for Palisades Nuclear Plant (Palisades). Palisades is located in Covert Township on the western side of Van Buren County, Michigan, and 50 miles west-southwest of Kalamazoo, Michigan. As part of the review of the license renewal application, the NRC is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) under the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, which include an analysis of pertinent environmental issues, including endangered or threatened species and impacts to fish and wildlife. This letter is being submitted under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended.

The proposed action would include the use and continued maintenance of existing plant facilities and transmission lines and would not result in new construction or disturbance or change in operations. The area surrounding the Palisades property is characterized by agricultural lands and heavily wooded, rugged sand dunes along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Van Buren State Park is located on the northern border of the site.

Palisades uses an closed-cycle cooling system to dissipate waste heat to the environment. Cooling water is drawn from Lake Michigan through offshore, underwater intake cribs at an approximate water depth of 35 ft. After circulating through the condensers and cooling towers, the cooling water is discharged through two tunnels that end offshore with high-velocity underwater discharge elbows.

For the specific purpose of connecting Palisades to the regional transmission system, there is a Palisades-Argenta 345-kV line, which extends approximately 40 miles eastward from the Palisades Substation to the Argenta Substation near Plainwell, north of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and the initial 0.6 mile segment of the Palisades-Cook 345-kV line, transmission line corridors occupy approximately 2200 acres of land. These transmission line corridors are being evaluated as part of the SEIS process. The corridors pass through land that is primarily agricultural and forest land. The enclosed transmission line map shows the transmission

system that is being evaluated in the SEIS. The switchyards are shown in the enclosed Palisades site layout figure.

To support the SEIS preparation process and to ensure compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, the NRC requests a list of species and information on protected, proposed, and candidate species and critical habitat that may be in the vicinity of Palisades and its associated transmission lines. In addition, please provide any information you consider appropriate under the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

We plan to hold two public NEPA scoping meetings on July 28, 2005, at the Lake Michigan College, 125 Veterans Boulevard, South Haven, Michigan 49090. On July 26, 2005, we plan to conduct a site audit. You and your staff are invited to attend both the site audit and the public meetings. Your office will receive a copy of the draft SEIS along with a request for comments. The anticipated publication date for the draft SEIS is February 2006.

If you have any questions concerning the NRC staff review of this license renewal application, please contact Mr. Robert Schaaf, Senior Environmental Project Manager, at 301-415-1312 or by e-mail at rgs@nrc.gov or Ms. Cristina Guerrero, Project Support, at 301-415-2981 or by e-mail at cxg3@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Pao-Tsin Kuo, Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No.: 50-255

Enclosures: 1. Palisades Transmission Line Map
2. Palisades Site Layout

cc w/encls.: See next page

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Pao-Tsin Kuo, Program Director
License Renewal and Environmental Impacts Program
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Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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Palisades Nuclear Plant

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Palisades Nuclear Plant

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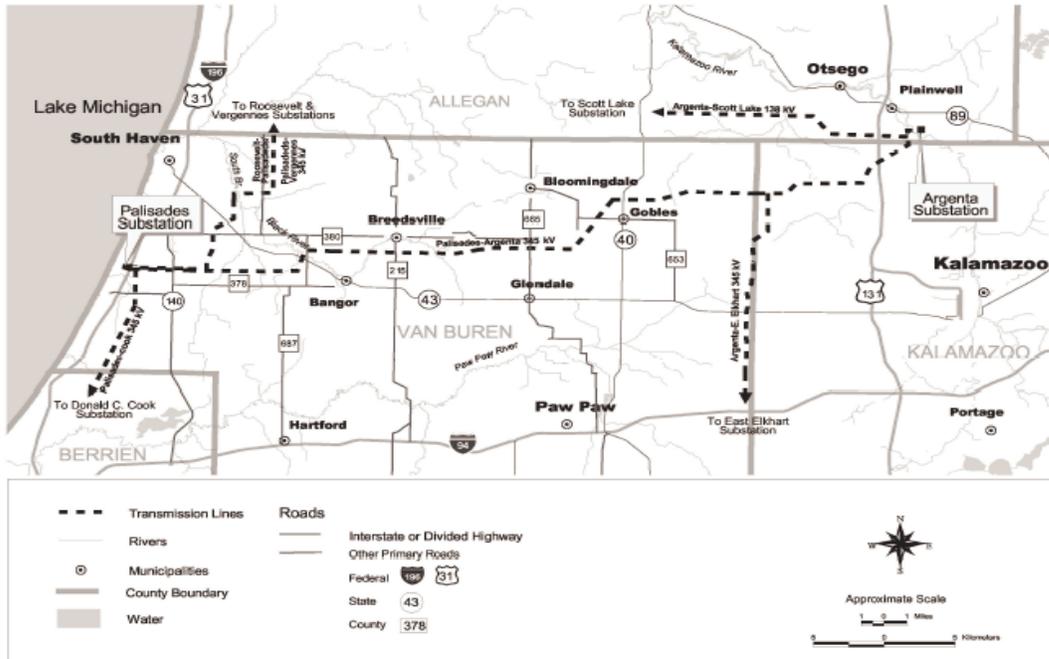
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**FIGURE 3.1-1
TRANSMISSION LINES**



**FIGURE 2.1-3
SITE MAP**

