

Official Transcript of Proceedings
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Title: Prairie Island Nuclear Plant
Public Meeting: Afternoon Session

Docket Number: (n/a)

Location: Red Wing, Minnesota

Date: Wednesday, December 16, 2009

Work Order No.: NRC-3241

Pages 1-21

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS THE
PRAIRIE ISLAND NUCLEAR GENERATING PLANT,
UNITS 1 AND 2, SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT RELATED TO LICENSE RENEWAL

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Held At The
Red Wing Public Library
225 East Avenue
Red Wing, Minnesota

On
Wednesday, December 16, 2009
2:00 p.m.

NRC PARTICIPANTS:

- Michael Fuller, Moderator
- Lance Rakovan
- Elaine Keegan
- Andy Imboden
- Jeffrey Rikhoff
- Allan Barker
- Prema Chandrathil
- Karla Stoder

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2:00 P.M.

1
2
3 MR. FULLER: Good afternoon. Can everyone
4 hear me? My name is Mike Fuller. I'm a Project
5 Manager at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, or NRC
6 as you will hear it referred to today.

7 It's my pleasure to be facilitating
8 today's meeting along with my colleague, Mr. Lance
9 Rakovan. Lance, if you could -- okay. Thank you. Our
10 job today is to help make this meeting as productive
11 as it possibly can be for everyone involved, and we'll
12 be looking for your help for that.

13 Our purpose today is to discuss the
14 license renewal and, specifically, the environmental
15 review for Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant,
16 Units 1 and 2, but more importantly, we are here today
17 to hear from you.

18 Today's meeting will have two parts.
19 First, we'll have a presentation from the NRC staff on
20 the license renewal process and the environmental
21 review process, sort of where we are and what lies
22 ahead. We will try to keep this part fairly short so
23 that we can get to the real reason we're here, and
24 that is, once again, to hear your comments. We want
25 to hear your comments regarding the draft Supplemental

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1 Environmental Impact Statement that was issued in
2 October.

3 Now, when you came in, you were asked to
4 fill out either a yellow or a blue card. The yellow
5 cards were for those folks who wish to speak today and
6 provide their comments, and I have some of those, and
7 we'll use those to ask folks to come up at the
8 appropriate time. The blue cards we asked you to fill
9 out so that we have your correct name and address and
10 so forth if you wish to be on our mailing list.

11 And I have a number of yellow cards here
12 that I'll be using, and if anyone wishes to speak and
13 has not filled out a yellow card, please raise your
14 hand and let us know and we'll get one to you.

15 I'll also mention that our meeting today
16 is being transcribed. It is important that we get a
17 good transcription of the meeting, and so we'll ask
18 that anyone that has any comments, when we get to that
19 point, actually come to the microphone. At that time
20 we'll ask you to please identify yourself and also
21 identify any group that you may be affiliated with.

22 I'll also ask that we keep any side
23 conversations to a minimum; and if you haven't already
24 done so, this will be a good time for everyone to
25 please silence their cell phones.

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1 We also had feedback forms available at
2 the table when you signed in. It's very important to
3 us that you take the opportunity to fill those out.
4 Your feedback will be very helpful to us as we plan
5 for future meetings such as this.

6 At this point I want to introduce Elaine
7 Keegan. Elaine is our project manager and lead for
8 the environmental review, and she has prepared some
9 slides. And also, Elaine, if you could, please
10 introduce some of the other folks who are here within
11 NRC. Thanks.

12 MS. KEEGAN: Can you hear me? Okay. Thank
13 you, Mike. As Mike said, I'm Elaine Keegan. I'm
14 Senior Project Manager in the Division of License
15 Renewal in the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation at
16 the NRC. I won't say I'm the new project manager.
17 I'm the last project manager for the environmental
18 part.

19 I would like to introduce a few people
20 from the NRC who are here. Andy Imboden, he's the
21 Branch Chief for the Environmental Technical Review
22 Group; Jeffrey Rikhoff is a socioeconomist in Andy's
23 branch; we have Allan Barker, who is the Senior
24 Government Liaison Officer out of the Region 3 office
25 near Chicago, Illinois; we have Prema Chandrathil, who

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1 is also out of the Region 3 office in Chicago, and she
2 is with the Office of Public Affairs; and we have
3 Karla Stoder, who is the Senior Residence Inspector at
4 Prairie Island.

5 For a brief overview of this meeting, what
6 I intend to do is give a very short overview of the
7 licensing process for Prairie Island so far, what we
8 have done so far. I'm going to talk a little bit
9 about the draft that we published in October.

10 There will be slides on how to provide
11 comments outside of this meeting, and as Mike said,
12 the major purpose of this meeting is to get comments
13 from the public.

14 NRC's regulatory oversight has basically
15 two primary statutes: the Atomic Energy Act and the
16 National Environmental Policy Act. The Atomic Energy
17 Act gives the NRC the authority to license operating
18 nuclear plants for 40 years. The 40 years is based on
19 economic considerations and antitrust matters. It's
20 not based on any safety or technical issues.

21 The Atomic Energy Act also gives the NRC
22 the authority to extend the license for 20 years as
23 long as the plant can be operated safely and the
24 environment can be protected.

25 The National Environmental Policy Act, or

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1 NEPA, was established in 1969 as a national policy for
2 considering the impacts of federal decision-making on
3 the environment, so all Federal Government agencies
4 have to write an environmental assessment for major
5 federal action. The license renewal has been deemed a
6 major federal action, and that is why we do prepare
7 the Environmental Impact Statement.

8 Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant
9 Unit 1 operating license expires August 9, 2013, Unit
10 2, October 24, 2014. 2013 and 2014. Northern States
11 Power came in in April of 2008 with a license renewal
12 application, and we have been working on that since
13 April of 2008.

14 The license renewal process has two
15 concurrent pathways. There is the safety review,
16 which looks at the safety aspects of plant operations,
17 and it also looks at the plant's aging management
18 program.

19 As of now, the safety evaluation report
20 documenting the findings from the safety review has
21 been published. It was published in October of 2009.

22 The findings have been presented to our Advisory
23 Committee on Reactor Safety, and I believe we're still
24 waiting on a letter from ACRS on their final outcome,
25 whether they approve or not.

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1 For the environmental part of the review
2 -- I lost my place. Okay.

3 We do an environmental review, and the
4 review starts off with a scoping process where
5 previous staff came to Red Wing and had a public
6 meeting to gather public comments. Our NRC staff went
7 to the plant, spent time there for an audit of the
8 environmental area. All of that was combined into the
9 draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for
10 license renewal. It's actually Supplement 39 to
11 NUREG-1437, which is the generic Environmental Impact
12 Statement.

13 As part of the review, the Prairie Island
14 Indian Community was a cooperating agency in the
15 preparation of the draft Environmental Impact
16 Statement because of their expertise in the areas of
17 historic and archeological resources, socioeconomic,
18 land use and environmental justice.

19 In the 1990s, in an effort to improve the
20 efficiency of the license renewal process, the NRC
21 performed a generic assessment of the environmental
22 impact associated with license renewal. 92 issues
23 were identified. 69 of those issues were identified
24 as generic to all operating plants and were given the
25 category 1 distinction. 21 remained which had to be

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1 site-specifically evaluated, and in addition to that,
2 environmental justice and the chronic effect of
3 electromagnetic fields also have to be evaluated on a
4 site-specific basis.

5 Impacts are quantified as small, moderate
6 and large, and all the areas, the different issues,
7 are fully explained in our Title 10 to the Code of
8 Federal Regulations, Part 51, Appendix B. It has the
9 list and the explanation for why it's small, moderate
10 or large.

11 Our decision standard for environmental
12 review is, as you can see here, to determine whether
13 or not adverse environmental impacts of license
14 renewal for Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant
15 Units 1 and 2 are so great that preserving the option
16 of license renewal for energy planning decision-making
17 would be unreasonable. Basically, is the renewal of
18 the operating license acceptable from an environmental
19 standpoint?

20 This slide shows site-specific or some of
21 the site-specific issues that were reviewed during the
22 environmental review process. Staff consulted with a
23 number of federal and state agencies, including the
24 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, in an effort to identify
25 threatened and endangered species and to identify

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1 other issues that are important to the area.

2 Cumulative impacts of all the issues were
3 evaluated, because by themselves, they don't
4 necessarily have a large impact; but when you combine
5 them with all the other issues, there could be a
6 significant issue. So we look at everything as
7 cumulative. Preliminary findings show that there is
8 potential for a moderate to large impact on the
9 aquatic and water resources.

10 We looked at alternatives to the nuclear
11 power plants, what options are available. One option
12 was no action where the licenses would expire.

13 They looked at conservation and there were
14 two alternate energy sources: One, a gas-fired at the
15 plant site and then a gas-fired at a different site.
16 And there were two combinations of alternatives that
17 were looked at, which were a combination gas-fired,
18 wind power, and conservation; and a second alternative
19 was either Unit 1 or Unit 2 at the plant remaining in
20 operation, combined with wind capacity and also
21 conservation.

22 Preliminary conclusions from the review
23 are impacts of license renewal would be small for the
24 resource areas. Potential environmental impacts of
25 likely power generational alternatives, including not

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1 renewing, could reach moderate to large in some areas.

2 And based on the findings, staff's recommendation is
3 that the environmental impacts of license renewal are
4 not so great that license renewal would not be
5 unreasonable.

6 These are the milestones. The ones in red
7 are the ones that have been accomplished. Draft
8 comments: Comments on the draft are due by midnight,
9 January 30, 2010.

10 Once we get the comments, we will address
11 the comments, we will revise the Environmental Impact
12 Statement as appropriate, and we will issue a final
13 Environmental Impact Statement. And as of right now,
14 we're not sure. It's going to be dependent upon the
15 number of comments and how much it's going to take to
16 resolve them.

17 Contact information: If you would like to
18 ask me any questions, my phone number is there, email
19 address is there. I will respond; I will get you the
20 information you request.

21 The draft Supplemental Environmental
22 Impact Statement, there will be a copy left here at
23 the library, and it's also online if you follow the
24 link at the bottom of the slide.

25 For submitting comments, if you submit

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1 cements to prairieislandeis@nrc.gov, we will get those
2 comments. You can mail them to the Chief of the Rule
3 Making and Directive Branch. In the past, we used to
4 have the option of walking the comments to the White
5 Flint Building in Rockville, Maryland, but that's been
6 taken away since the rule-making people went away to a
7 different location. So those are the best ways to get
8 your comments after this meeting today.

9 And that's it, and I'll turn it back to
10 Mike.

11 MR. FULLER: Thank you, Elaine. At this
12 time, I'd like to ask if anyone has any questions for
13 Elaine. If there was anything that she mentioned that
14 you would like any clarification for or any
15 clarification on, if you would raise your hand,
16 please.

17 Okay. And also, as I said before, we're
18 transcribing this, so I would ask you to please step
19 up to the microphone so that the transcriber can hear
20 clearly what your question is. So please come on up.

21 MS. EIDE-TOLLEFSON: I'm Kristen
22 Eide-Tollefson. I'm from Frontenac, Minnesota. I was
23 interested in the category of new and significant
24 information and what kind of factors those might be,
25 and if NRC considers the big blip in the federal waste

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1 programs to be a factor such as that.

2 And I had a second question about the
3 decision standard. The way that it's phrased, it
4 sounds like the NRC is in charge of assuring safety
5 and environmental protection for decision-makers who
6 make energy planning decisions, that this is not one
7 of NRC's functions but it's for energy planners. And
8 could you just explain that a little more.

9 MR. IMBODEN: My name is Andy Imboden. I'm
10 the branch chief of the environmental branch. The
11 first question you had was new and significant
12 information, and it's important to point out that what
13 was published is the draft site-specific Environmental
14 Impact Statement. And if we missed something or there
15 is a new development, that's the kind of material that
16 we want to make sure we include in the final impact
17 statement.

18 And the second part of your question was
19 the decision-making standard. That is the commission
20 decision-making standard. That was published by the
21 commission, and the Atomic Energy Act for license
22 renewal says that we may extend the license. It
23 doesn't say we shall.

24 So it is up to the commission to go
25 forward or not, and that's just with respect to the

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1 environment. That's the standard that the commission
2 will be using to go forward or not with the license
3 renewal.

4 MS. EIDE-TOLLEFSON: Could you clarify who
5 the energy planners and decision-makers are in that
6 context?

7 MS. KEEGAN: The decision-makers are --
8 it's not the NRC who are the decision-makers. It's
9 the state and local people that decide how much power
10 is needed for the area. They decide, and the plant
11 itself, whether they want to continue operation.
12 That's all on the state/local level.

13 MS. EIDE-TOLLEFSON: Thanks.

14 MR. FULLER: Okay. Thank you. Any other
15 questions for clarification on what Elaine went over?

16 (No response.)

17 MR. FULLER: Okay. We are now at the
18 point where we would like to switch over to our public
19 comment phase of this meeting, and again, this is
20 really the most important part of why we're here
21 today. So we do want to hear from folks. So far I
22 have one person who has indicated that they definitely
23 want to speak and provide comments.

24 I would also like to mention that Mr.
25 Chuck Ackman is here today, he represents Senator

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1 Klobuchar, and he wanted me to let you know that he's
2 also here to listen and to hear your comments.

3 Now, if there are folks who would like to
4 make a comment and as of yet have not filled out a
5 yellow card, just raise your hand and we'll get one to
6 you; but as it stands right now, we have one person
7 who has indicated that they would like to make some
8 comments.

9 So Mr. Alan Childs, if you would, come on
10 up.

11 MR. CHILDS: Thank you, Mike. My name is
12 Alan Childs II. I am currently the Vice President for
13 the Prairie Island Indian Community and also a tribal
14 member of the Prairie Island Indian Community which
15 resides within 600 yards of the Prairie Island Nuclear
16 Plant. Our tribal offices, our police department, our
17 clinic, our community center all reside within this
18 distance.

19 As we went through the slides, some of the
20 comments, I guess, we are opposed to the relicensing
21 of the nuclear reactors at Prairie Island; but as a
22 small impact as you saw in some of the slides, I think
23 any small impact is a large impact to our community as
24 the proximity which we reside to the nuclear power
25 plant.

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1 So although it may be small when the
2 environmental study is done, that is only a snapshot,
3 and we want to be very clear that we feel that is a
4 very large impact in our community as our everyday
5 lives continue to go on and we live in the shadow of
6 the nuclear power plant.

7 Also, we feel that the regulations for
8 environmental impact studies and things of that nature
9 are inadequate compared to what is going on in other
10 states as requirements as far as Illinois and other
11 areas. And so we feel that these requirements are
12 very inadequate.

13 And as far as the rule-making policy and
14 things like that, it needs to be looked at, and
15 possibly a national standard or something to that
16 effect, because we do feel that these are only
17 snapshots taken for the time of the environmental
18 study, and then that's the only information we have.
19 Ongoing information is very limited in that aspect.

20 As we know, Xcel just currently did a
21 groundwater study, which was the first in 30 years, so
22 these things we feel are very inadequate for our
23 safety and the standard that we set for our community
24 and what we want as far as safety.

25 Also, we continue to feel that as we move

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1 through the licensing process, the issue of
2 above-ground waste is still clearly absent from any of
3 the environmental impacts that I've seen. And so when
4 we're talking 100,000 years or 10,000 years, you know,
5 how do you account for that in an environmental
6 impact, and we don't see that.

7 And again, there is no solution to this as
8 we continue to relicense. The inevitability is that
9 there will be more nuclear waste and it will be stored
10 there onsite. And so, again, no solution and
11 continued pollution of our environment.

12 And so these are some of the comments that
13 I wanted to make today on behalf of the Prairie Island
14 Indian Community, that we are opposed to the
15 relicensing, and that we do feel that many of the
16 regulations in regards to environmental impacts to the
17 rules are very inadequate to what else is going on in
18 other areas of the country. So thank you.

19 MR. FULLER: Thank you, Mr. Childs. Is
20 there anyone else who would wish to speak, make a
21 comment?

22 I have Mr. Mark Schimmel from Xcel Energy.

23 MR. SCHIMMEL: Thank you very much. I'm
24 Mark Schimmel. I'm the Site Vice President at the
25 Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant. I'm here

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1 today to give Xcel's position on the NRC draft
2 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

3 Xcel Energy supports the draft
4 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. We
5 believe that the rigorous audits and inspections
6 conducted by the NRC has led to a report confirming
7 our own conclusion, that continued operation of the
8 plant will have minimal impact on the environment.

9 The draft Supplemental Environmental
10 Impact Statement supports the mission of our own
11 facility, which is safe, reliable, and economical
12 operation, with the safety of the public, our
13 employees and the environment being our number 1
14 priority, as it always is.

15 Prairie Island is more than a power plant
16 operated by highly skilled workers. It's a part of
17 the community. Not only does the plant rely on local
18 companies for goods and services, but our employees
19 also live and contribute to the surrounding
20 communities.

21 Some examples of that: We're very proud
22 to participate and give back to the community in lots
23 of different ways, such as serving on city and town
24 boards, as leaders in civic and community
25 organizations; a lot of our people are coaches on

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1 sports teams of local schools, local church
2 committees, local boards and councils, along with
3 members of charitable organizations.

4 Our employees also raise a considerable
5 amount of money for local United Way campaigns,
6 American Cancer Society, and the Make-A-Wish
7 Foundation, just to name a few.

8 Our employees, along with myself, feel
9 that the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant has
10 been a productive contributor to the energy needs of
11 the State of Minnesota and is a valuable asset and a
12 good neighbor to the surrounding communities and
13 environment.

14 We remain committed to operating safely,
15 reliably, economically, and focusing on being a good
16 neighbor and a good steward of the environment.

17 As I mentioned previously, the safety of
18 the public, our employees, and the environment remains
19 our number 1 priority and always has been. I and the
20 rest of the employees, several sitting in this room,
21 for instance, look forward to serving you and meeting
22 the needs of our communities for many years to come.
23 Thank you.

24 MR. FULLER: Thank you, Mr. Schimmel.

25 Okay. Anyone else? We have Ms. Vicky

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1 Winfrey with the Prairie Island Indian community.

2 MS. WINFREY: Good afternoon, everyone.
3 I'm Victoria Winfrey, I've been elected President of
4 the Prairie Island Tribal Council, and I would like to
5 say that living only 600 yards from the nuclear plant
6 and working there and seeing it every day, it makes
7 you feel is it really safe, are you really monitoring
8 it enough.

9 I know we have had so many studies done
10 and we've heard so much about it, but through the
11 meetings that I have been to, the wells that were
12 studied weren't really a lot -- there weren't a lot of
13 them located on the reservation and we're closest to
14 the plant. And so I feel there hasn't been enough
15 monitoring.

16 And I don't know how up to date the
17 equipment is, if it's state-of-the-art, but if we need
18 better monitoring, we would like that. We would like
19 to feel safe and we would like to have the best of
20 everything because it is close to our community.

21 And that's all I would like to see and to
22 make sure that the air is monitored, the water, the
23 groundwater, make sure everything is monitored
24 continually and we get that information.

25 And then talking about good neighbors,

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1 we're good neighbors, also. We're the largest
2 employer in Goodhue County, and we do a lot of
3 donations to our surrounding areas, and we still
4 continue to do the things that the City of Red Wing
5 does, contribute and employ our people. Some work in
6 the city and live in the City of Red Wing.

7 So we still are opposed to the
8 relicensing, and that's our position as a tribe.
9 Thank you.

10 MR. FULLER: Thank you, Ms. Winfrey.

11 Okay. I don't see any other hands of
12 anyone else, so at this point I would like to turn it
13 over to Mr. Andy Imboden who can sort of wrap things
14 up for us here. Thank you.

15 Andy?

16 MR. IMBODEN: My name is Andy Imboden,
17 Chief of the Environmental Review Branch in the Office
18 of Nuclear Reactor Regulation. The purpose of this
19 meeting and this evening's meeting at the same
20 location is to collect comments on the draft
21 Environmental Impact Statement concerning the license
22 renewal of Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant
23 Units 1 and 2, and I would like to thank everyone who
24 spoke.

25 Comments received orally at today's

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1 presentations and also that we get in writing will be
2 reviewed by me and my staff, and we'll provide a
3 response to those when we publish the final
4 Environmental Impact Statement.

5 So speaking here isn't your only
6 opportunity to provide a comment. If something you
7 heard peaks your curiosity, something in the handouts,
8 there is different ways to get your comments in by the
9 end of next month.

10 We heard some very important comments
11 today on nuclear waste issues, environmental
12 monitoring and a shared concern for the safe operation
13 of nuclear power, and so I would like to thank
14 everyone for coming and we'll be here to talk to you
15 offline for a while. Thank you.

16 MR. FULLER: As Andy just said and I can
17 reinforce, folks from the NRC will be staying after
18 the meeting today if anyone has questions or anything
19 else they would like to discuss further. But at this
20 point, we can go ahead and adjourn this meeting, and
21 thank you all very much for coming.

22 (Whereupon, at 2:40 p.m. the proceedings
23 were adjourned.)
24
25

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