

November 15, 2013

Ms. Mary Ann Heidermann
Manager of Government Programs
and Compliance
State Historic Preservation Office
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul, MN 55102-1903

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED 40-YEAR LICENSE RENEWAL OF THE PRAIRIE ISLAND INDEPENDENT SPENT FUEL STORAGE INSTALLATION IN GOODHUE COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Dear Ms. Heidermann:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff is reviewing an application from the Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota corporation (NSPM), to renew Materials License Number SNM-2506 for the Prairie Island (PI) Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI) located in Red Wing, Goodhue County, Minnesota. NSPM is requesting that the license be renewed for a 40-year period. In 1993, the NRC issued a 20-year license to NSPM to receive, possess, store, and transfer spent fuel generated at the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant (PINGP) in the PI ISFSI. License SNM-2506 currently allows NSPM to store up to 48 transnuclear-40 casks (TN-40), and TN-40 heat transfer high thermal (TN 40HT) casks. The proposed license renewal would not involve any new construction, disturbance of previously undisturbed land, or changes to routine ISFSI operations. Thus, approval of the proposed license renewal would not result in any construction activities, excavation or other land disturbance, or changes to the operations of the PI ISFSI.

As established in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (10 CFR 51) Part 51, "Environmental Protection Regulations for Domestic Licensing and Related Regulatory Functions," the NRC regulation that implements the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), the NRC staff has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The purpose of the draft EA is to assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed license renewal and of reasonable alternatives. The draft EA includes an analysis of relevant environmental issues and documents the NRC staff's preliminary determinations regarding the environmental impacts from the proposed continued operation of the PI ISFSI, including impacts to historic and cultural resources.

The NRC staff is coordinating compliance with the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA) in parallel with the NEPA process using the process set forth in Title 36 of the Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR) 800.8©. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.8©, the NRC staff is using the preparation of EA to comply with its obligations under Section 106 of the NHPA.

As part of the review of the NSPM application, on April 25, 2012, the NRC staff requested input from the Minnesota Historical Society to facilitate the identification of historic and cultural resources that may be affected by the proposed renewal of the PI ISFSI license. By letter dated May 29, 2012, the Minnesota Historical Society stated that, based on available information, no properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) will be affected by the project.

The NRC staff also contacted Native American Tribes and requested information regarding historic sites or cultural resources that may be affected by the proposed action, including properties of religious and cultural significance that may be eligible as historic properties under the NHPA. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe responded to NRC that it does not have any known recorded sites of religious or cultural importance near the site. The tribe requested that if any human remains or suspected human remains were found, all work should cease and the County Sheriff's Office and Office of the State Archaeologist should be contacted.

In October 2012, NRC and the Prairie Island Indian Community (PIIC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU acknowledges the PIIC's special expertise in the areas of historic and cultural resources, socioeconomics, land use, and environmental justice (EJ) as they relate to license renewal for the PI ISFSI. The MOU establishes a cooperating agency relationship between NRC and the PIIC and defines the roles and responsibilities of both entities and the process they will use to prepare an EA that incorporates and reflects the PIIC's views in the areas of special expertise. The MOU can be found under the Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML12284A456. In preparing this draft EA, the PIIC and NRC worked together to develop a comprehensive evaluation of the areas covered by the MOU. NRC considered all input the PIIC provided and incorporated information where appropriate.

Table 5.5-1 of the draft EA lists the tribes contacted and the letters' ADAMS accession numbers.

As discussed in the draft EA Section 4.10, a number of archaeological surveys and other resource investigations have been performed within and near the PINGP property on Prairie Island. Table 3.10-1 of the draft EA provides a list of the archeological sites recorded within the PINGP site boundary. Bartron Site (21GD002) has been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP. A second site, Cooling Tower Site (21GD148), has been recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP but is not yet listed. Because identified historic and cultural sites are located outside the ISFSI facility footprint and the proposed action would not disturb any new land, NRC staff concludes that potential historic, cultural, and archaeological impacts from the proposed action would be SMALL. Therefore, the NRC staff finds that the proposed action (continued operation of the PI ISFSI) will not affect historic properties.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.33, the NRC staff is making the draft EA and draft FONSI available for public review and comment. In doing so, the NRC staff determined that preparation of the draft EA and draft FONSI furthers the purposes of NEPA. The NRC staff is enclosing the draft EA for your review and comment. Please provide any information, comments, or concerns you may have on the draft EA during the comment period, which ends 30 days after the date of publication in the *Federal Register* notice. Comments should be submitted in writing either by mail to Ms. Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mailstop: 3WFN 6A44, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001 (include Docket ID NRC-2013-0251 in the subject line), or under Docket ID NRC-2013-0251 at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Based on the comments received, the NRC staff may determine that a final FONSI is appropriate or instead find that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is warranted should significant impacts resulting from the proposed action be identified. The NRC staff's final determination will be noticed in the *Federal Register*.

The draft EA is publicly available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The ADAMS accession number for the draft EA is ML13205A120.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Ms. Jean Trefethen, Project Manager, by telephone at 301-415-0867 or by e-mail at Jean.Trefethen@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Kevin Hsueh, Chief
Environmental Review Branch
Environmental Protection
and Performance Assessment Directorate
Division of Waste Management
and Environmental Protection
Office of Federal and State Materials
and Environmental Management Programs

Docket No.: 72-10
License No.: SNM-2506

Enclosure: Draft EA
(1 Hard copy and 1 CD)

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.33, the NRC staff is making the draft EA and draft FONSI available for public review and comment. In doing so, the NRC staff determined that preparation of the draft EA and draft FONSI furthers the purposes of NEPA. The NRC staff is enclosing the draft EA for your review and comment. Please provide any information, comments, or concerns you may have on the draft EA during the comment period, which ends 30 days after the date of publication in the *Federal Register* notice. Comments should be submitted in writing either by mail to Ms. Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Division of Administrative Services, Office of Administration, Mailstop: 3WFN 6A44, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001 (include Docket ID NRC-2013-0251 in the subject line), or under Docket ID NRC-2013-0251 at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Based on the comments received, the NRC staff may determine that a final FONSI is appropriate or instead find that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is warranted should significant impacts resulting from the proposed action be identified. The NRC staff's final determination will be noticed in the *Federal Register*.

The draft EA is publicly available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The ADAMS accession number for the draft EA is ML13205A120.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Ms. Jean Trefethen, Project Manager, by telephone at 301-415-0867 or by e-mail at Jean.Trefethen@nrc.gov.

Sincerely,

Kevin Hsueh, Chief
 Environmental Review Branch
 Environmental Protection
 and Performance Assessment Directorate
 Division of Waste Management
 and Environmental Protection
 Office of Federal and State Materials
 and Environmental Management Programs

Docket No.: 72-10
 License No.: SNM-2506

Enclosure: Draft EA
 (1 Hard copy and 1 CD)

DISTRIBUTION: MLemocelli/OGC Chair/OGC SRuffin/NMSS Sampson/OGC
 MShoemaker/FSME LCamper/FSME

ML13172A378

OFFICE	EPPAD/ERB	EPPAD/ERB	OGC	EPPAD/ERB
NAME	DDias-Toro	TMoon	MLemoncelli	KHsueh
DATE	06/ /13	06/24/13	09/24/13	11/15/13

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY