

My name is Mike McLeod, and I'm here today on behalf of Xcel Energy Inc. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding Xcel Energy's perspective on the Holtec International license application and the importance of a consolidated interim storage solution to the issue of used nuclear fuel.

Xcel Energy is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota and serves more than 3 million electric and natural gas customers in eight states, including New Mexico and Texas. The proposed Holtec facility is located in our service territory in New Mexico and would be a customer of Xcel Energy.

Nuclear power generation is an important part of our balanced energy mix, which also includes coal, gas and renewable energy. We operate two nuclear plants: the Monticello Nuclear Generating Plant in Monticello, Minnesota, and the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant in Red Wing, Minnesota. These facilities provide 30 percent of the electricity for Xcel Energy's Upper Midwest customers. For our company and for the nation, nuclear energy is a reliable, resilient and clean source of baseload power.

Today, used nuclear fuel is safely stored in storage pools and dry casks at our Monticello and Prairie Island plants. In 1982, Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, which outlined the Department of Energy's responsibility for developing a geologic repository for used nuclear fuel. As a result of this statute, the federal government made a commitment to accept and permanently store spent fuel beginning in 1998, a commitment that has not been met. We've worked closely with our host communities, including the Prairie Island Indian Community, and other stakeholders for years to encourage the federal government to fulfill its obligation to develop a solution for spent nuclear fuel from the nation's reactors and shut down sites. We strongly support the creation of a permanent repository for spent fuel, but believe that an interim storage facility is an important step toward that development.

We support a robust stakeholder engagement process, and a thorough regulatory and licensing proceeding for any proposed interim facility, including the Holtec facility. Such a process will help ensure environmental and safety protections for the facility.

We also appreciate that our communities and customers in and around our New Mexico and Texas service territories are a part of this discussion. We are proud to be part of the Eastern New Mexico community and its pragmatic support of an "all of the above" energy policy. A project like the Holtec facility is consistent with our tradition in this state and will support economic development and jobs in our region. If approved, the Holtec project will also promote sound energy policy not only in New Mexico, but in Minnesota and throughout the nation.

We look forward to progress as the NRC considers Holtec International's application for a license to construct and operate a consolidated interim spent fuel storage facility in Lea County, New Mexico, as well as a parallel process for a permanent storage solution.

Thank you for your time today.

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