



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

May 27, 1992

Donald R. Chapdelaine, Chair
Dakota County Board of Commissioners
575 Chapel Lane
Eagan, Minnesota 55121

Dear Mr. Chapdelaine:

I am responding to your letter of February 14, 1992, regarding your concerns about spent fuel storage at the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant. Northern States Power (NSP) currently stores its spent fuel in its storage pool. However, the pool will soon be full and its capacity cannot be increased. As an interim measure, the utility plans to store some spent fuel in metallic casks until the Department of Energy can begin to accept the fuel in the future.

In order to provide additional onsite spent fuel storage capacity, on August 31, 1990, NSP applied to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a materials license, under the provisions of Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 72 (10 CFR Part 72), to permit dry spent fuel storage at an Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation (ISFSI). NRC published a Notice of Opportunity for a Hearing in the Federal Register on October 19, 1990. Subsequently, the Prairie Island Mdewakanton Sioux Indian Community, the Minnesota Department of Public Service, and the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board filed petitions to intervene against NSP's plans to build an ISFSI. On March 8, 1991, the petitioners agreed to withdraw their petitions to intervene. In return NSP and NRC agreed to give the petitioners copies of all correspondence related to the spent fuel storage application for Prairie Island. NRC also agreed to allow them to present their views on the ISFSI. The NRC staff is conducting its environmental and safety reviews of the proposed ISFSI. You expressed concern about the environmental impact of the ISFSI being located near the banks of the Mississippi River. This issue and other environmental issues are being considered by the staff in the environmental review. As part of its safety review of the ISFSI design, the staff will also evaluate the ability of these casks to withstand accidents and natural phenomenon, including a flood, without the loss of safety functions or containment of the spent fuel.

NSP proposes to use the TN-40 cask designed by Transnuclear, Inc. This cask model is currently being reviewed by the NRC. After having studied the alternatives, NSP decided that storing spent fuel in these casks was their best choice.

You also express concern about the impact of electric rates on NPS customers. Electric rates and the economic choice of the type of generating capacity used is primarily a matter for states utility rate commissions and is not within the jurisdiction of the NRC.

100018

9206120191 920527
PDR ADCK 05000282
Y PER

NSP 1/0

Mr. Donald R. Chapdelaine

2

In response to your health and safety concerns related to the proposed ISFSI, I would like to point out that the Environmental Protection Agency's Standards (40 CFR 191, Subpart A) require that the dose to any member of the public resulting from activities in the uranium fuel cycle shall not exceed 25 millirem per year. The NRC has adopted this value in Part 72 of its regulations governing the storage of spent fuel. For comparison, natural background radiation near the Prairie Island site is about 300 millirem per year.

NSP has stated that it has designed and located the fuel storage facility to limit radiation to members of the public from these operations to about 0.03 mrem/yr.

The NRC's review is not yet complete and it is not, therefore, appropriate for me to speculate on the outcome of this review beyond mentioning the standards that the facility must meet.

Because of your keen and sincere interest in this matter, I will send you copies of our Environmental Assessment and Safety Evaluation Reports when they are issued. These documents will thoroughly describe the scope and results of our review.

I hope this responds to your concerns.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by

Charles J. Haughney, Chief
Source Containment and
Devices Branch
Division of Industrial and
Medical Nuclear Safety, NMSS

DISTRIBUTION	Docket No.	72-10	PDR/LPDR	
NRC File Center		IMNS	Central File	IMIF R/F
NMSS R/F		IMSB	R/F	FSturz
FBrown		JSchneider		RVirgilio
AMasciantonio		PHartmann, RIII		RLickus, RIII
PShuttleworth		R. Cunningham		J. Greeves

[CHAPDELAINÉ]
*See previous concurrence

OFC	:IMIF*	:IMIF*	:IMIF*	:OGC*	:IMSB	:	:
	:jc/tk:	:	:	:		:	:
NAME	:JSchneider:	fb:FBrown	:FSturz	:EJReis	:CHaughney	:	: :
DATE	:04/16/92	:04/15/92	:04/21/92	:05/12/92	5 04/25/92	:	: