1	PUBLIC HEARING - 24-68
2	WEBEX - MARCH 24, 2025 - 6:00 P.M.
3	BEFORE THE OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
4	FOR THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
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6	In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a
7	Certificate of Need for Additional Dry Cask Storage at the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation
8	spent ruel storage installation
9	MPUC DOCKET NO: E-002/CN-24-68
10	
11	OAH DOCKET NO: 25-2500-39971
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13	Hearing held remotely via:
14	Webex and Telephone
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17	March 24, 2025
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24	BEFORE: Judge Megan McKenzie
25	STENOGRAPHIC COURT REPORTER: Christine Simons, RMR, RPR
45	SIENOGRAPHIC COURT REPORTER: CHITSCHIE SIMOHS, RMR, RPR

1	APPEARANCES:
2	CHRISTOPHER CERNY, Winthrop & Weinstine,
3	P.A., appeared on behalf of Northern States Power
4	Company d/b/a Xcel Energy.
5	KATHERINE ARNOLD, Assistant Attorney
6	General, appeared on behalf of the Minnesota
7	
	Department of Commerce.
8	PUC STAFF:
9	Craig Janezich
10	DOC EERA STAFF:
11	Jenna Ness
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15	WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were
16	duly had and entered of record, to wit:
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	
<b>4</b> 5	

1		INDEX	
2	SPEAKER		PAGE
3	Judge McKenzie		4
4	Craig Janezich		6
5	Pam Gorman Prochaska		8
6	Jenna Ness		13
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			
17			
18			
19			
20			
21			
22			
23			
24			
25			

JUDGE MCKENZIE: We are going on the record now and convening this public hearing In the Matter of the Application of Xcel Energy for a Certificate of Need for Additional Dry Cask Storage at the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation. This is PUC Docket CN-24-68; this is OAH Docket Number 25-2500-39971.

Welcome, everyone. My name is Megan McKenzie, and I am an Administrative Law Judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings. The Office of Administrative Hearings is an independent entity of state government that is not affiliated with the Public Utilities Commission, Xcel Energy, the Department of Commerce, the Attorney General's Office, or any other party to this proceeding.

And I have been requested -- the PUC has requested that I preside over this public hearing and an evidentiary hearing in this matter. I will review all of your comments and the record as a whole after the evidentiary hearing and submit a report to the Public Utilities Commission setting forth findings of fact, conclusions of law and a recommendation to the Commission. The Public Utilities Commission will then take that

recommendation and make the final decision.

So this hearing's purpose is to obtain input from the public and the community in regards to the proposed project, which is the additional storage capacity at the existing installation at the Prairie Island nuclear generating plant.

So what we will do here today is have some introductions and brief presentations from some of the parties involved in this case. We will then move to the public comments portion where we will encourage everyone to make comments.

We do have a court reporter present on this hearing, and so even though we're not in a courtroom -- or, I guess, I'm in a courtroom, you all are not necessarily in a courtroom, but this is an official proceeding. And it is important that we have everything accurately recorded because I will use the transcript in making my recommendations, and the Commission will ultimately review that as part of their determination.

So it's important that everyone speak clearly, enunciate. We'll ask that everyone just speak one at a time, and, please, if you have any names or places or acronyms, please spell them out so that the court reporter can accurately write them

down.

And so I will start out, we can go to then the next portion. I guess I jumped the gun a little bit, here's the agenda. So I just ask for people to introduce themselves as we move forward through the presentations.

MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: Are you ready for me to start, Judge McKenzie?

JUDGE MCKENZIE: Yes, please go ahead.

MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: Okay. Hello. My name is Craig Janezich, and I'm a facilities planner with the Public Utilities Commission. On this slide, there's my contact information with my e-mail address and phone number if you have any questions about this docket.

When the Commission makes a decision, they need to look at -- they determine their decision based on the certificate of need, and in doing so, they have to look at the probable direct or indirect result of a denial, and that's impact -- and its impact on future adequacy; whether there's a more reasonable or prudent alternative to the proposed facility; evidence in the record of if granting the certificate would be more favorable to society than consequences of denying it; and

evidence in the record that shows the approval won't impede on other rules and regulations in federal/state government, local government.

This slide shows you a general timeline of the application. Obviously today, March 24th, we're going to have -- oh, that's reversed. It should be March 24th is the virtual hearing; March 25th is the in-person hearing. We anticipate the Administrative Law Judge to issue a report on July 1st, and the Commission will consider whether a certificate of need should be issued in July or August.

I will say after the Commission makes a determination, the legislature has one legislative session to review or modify or not do anything with the Public Utilities Commission decision before it is in effect.

We're accepting comments, written comments, through April 10th, 2025. We'd ask you get them to us by 4:30 p.m. You can send them to us via online, our website, e-mail, or U.S. mail. We just ask that you include the PUC Docket Number 24-68 or the OAH Docket Number 25-2500-39971, and there are several questions we'd like you to focus on if you are, in fact, going to participate.

This last slide shows you where you can access -- or my last slide shows you where you can access the environmental impact statement if you would like to review that, the full case record.

And you also can subscribe to the docket. That's helpful when anything is ever filed to the docket, you'll receive an e-mail, and you'll be notified if you'd like to follow closer to what's going on.

The other option -- and if you want, you can use the eDocket website. What you do is you put the Docket Number 24-68 in the docket number space and you hit search. And that will show you everything on the record that the ALJ and the Commission can consider when making their decision on this docket.

Then, I'll hand it over to Pam from Xcel Energy.

MS. PAM GORMAN PROCHASKA: Good afternoon. Thanks for having me. Yes, I am Pam Gorman Prochaska from Xcel Energy. I am a -- our general manager of fleet operations. I work in the nuclear policy and planning area. So I will be giving you an overview of the project itself, and as you see on the slide, the docket numbers are there if you want to reference them.

Next slide, please, or do I do it?

Okay. Again, this is just an overview of the certificate of need application, which we filed in February of 2024. So, again, a high-level summary: Xcel Energy believes the operation of the Prairie Island plant beyond 2033 and '34 is in the best interest for our customers, the state, the environment, and the communities we serve.

So as part of extending the operation of the plant, we need to increase the spent fuel storage at Prairie Island, and this application would extend it for an additional 20 years of operation, so between 2033-34 and 2053 and '54. The 20-year extension is based on the resource planning models that we conducted for the Upper Midwest integrated resource plan that was recently approved by the Minnesota PUC.

And just a sidenote, adding the storage would be within the existing dry storage site footprint as it exists today. And we have a picture of what that looks like coming up, so I'll be able to better explain when we get to the picture, but that's kind of the summary of where we're at.

Next slide.

So Minnesota state statute requires a

certificate of need for expanding existing dry cask storage. And that -- what goes along with that is an environmental impact statement, and that was issued February 2025. And the comment period is open now and will run through April 10th, as previously mentioned.

We had done previous certificate of needs as we have expanded the storage site, which supported the 2033 and '34 operation, and then, as mentioned, on February 7th, 2024, that is when the company filed the new certificate of need application with the PUC for the 20 years of extended operation.

And, again, Craig already went over the schedule, but anticipating a decision by the end of 2025, and then that legislative stay or review that would be in the 2026 session.

Next slide.

So at Prairie Island -- and, again, the picture, I believe, might be the next slide, but we currently have 52 dry storage systems at the facility. We're going to load another three this year. As we expand for this certificate of need, it will not change the footprint of the ISFSI and where the casks are currently located. We would

anticipate another 34 canisters that support this 20-year life extension from '33, '34 to '53 and '54.

Next slide.

So along with the state side -- or state process, there's also a process with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for a license -- extending our license. So we currently have the licenses that go until '33 and '34, and the next process that we would go through with the NRC is called subsequent license renewal, SLR. And that is where we will ask the NRC for a license to extend to those 2053 and '54 dates.

The schedule, as we are looking at it now, we would file that SLR application with the NRC by the end of 2026, quarter 3/quarter 4. And then right now those applications are typically taking 18 to 24 months as part of that review cycle with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and so we would anticipate that we have that renewed license by the end of 2028.

And that allows us five years, really, to make changes or upgrade equipment or any changes that the NRC may -- you know, go with the renewed license. And we have outages then between 2028 to 2033 and '34 to make those changes that may come

with that renewed license.

To date, the NRC has already issued nine subsequent license renewals. And one of those is our Monticello nuclear plant that received it at the end of the year in 2024. Currently there are 13 units that are under review and intent has been filed for another 28 units. So the NRC is in the midst of doing a number of these subsequent license renewal applications.

Next slide.

So here's a good visual. So you can see the plant in the background there off to the right with the two reactors, and then in the foreground here is the footprint of what the current independent spent fuel storage installation, or ISFSI, looks like.

As you can see, we have, as mentioned, 52 canisters -- casks loaded, and, you know, do another three this year and up to 64 to get us to the end of the current license. And then, as mentioned, we are seeking approval for an additional 34 canisters that will provide that last 20 years of operation as part of the extension.

And as you can -- I mean, I'll just -you know, as you can see, it's not great, but it's

surrounded by a security fence, obviously, and then an area for our security to be able to monitor that perimeter. And then all of that is surrounded by an earthen berm which, you know, like I said, you can kind of make it out, but it's got an earthen berm that surrounds the entire ISFSI.

Next slide.

So if you have any questions on our application, or in general any questions, you can always reach out to myself or Amanda Jepson, who works for me and is really leading this project in our filing for the extended storage, that you're always welcome to reach out to us if you have questions on the proposal.

And next -- that might be our last slide.
Yes.

MS. JENNA NESS: Hi. My name is Jenna
Ness. I am with the Department of Commerce on the
Energy Environmental Review and Analysis team, and I
was the project manager for the environmental review
in this project, meaning I wrote the EIS.

Next slide, please.

So we have the final EIS available for this project, and it will be the environmental review document associated with the certificate of

1	need. An EIS analyzes the potential human and
2	environmental impacts for the project, as well as
3	when a certificate of need is involved
4	alternatives to the project, which you could see in
5	the document if you've reviewed it or are planning
6	to. This will be used by the Commission when they
7	make their decision about the CN
8	Next slide.
9	the certificate of need, excuse me.
10	And, Craig, I did have a question, is
11	this going to be posted in eDockets, this
12	presentation?
13	MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: Yeah, I will post
14	it. Yeah.
15	MS. JENNA NESS: Okay. Thank you. I
16	just wanted to clarify because I know we're going
17	through the slides kind of quick. So if you don't
18	catch our information on here, ask us in the chat.
19	We can post it in there, or it will be posted as
20	well because I have a lot of links on here as well.
21	MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: Right.
22	MS. JENNA NESS: So on the Department of
23	Commerce website you can navigate to the project
24	webpage and get more information there and find the
25	EIS, as well as the Commission's website. I did

send a paper copy to the Red Wing public library, and if you e-mail me personally, I can look into getting you a printed copy if you'd like one yourself, but those are limited as they are incredibly large.

Next slide, please.

And that's all I have, Judge McKenzie.

JUDGE MCKENZIE: Okay. Very good.

We will move now to taking comments from the public. So just a few notes, I guess, about that. I very much encourage anyone who would like to make a comment to make a comment. We also have an in-person hearing tomorrow, which will cover the same -- basically the same information you've heard today.

There is also the ability to make written comments, and we will make sure that we put that slide up again before the end. I did just want to note that all comments are given the same weight, whether they are made in person, on this Webex, or in writing. So feel free to give a comment in the manner that is most comfortable to you. All comments provided by the deadline of April 10th will be considered.

So we will now move to taking any of the

1 members of the public who wish to make a comment. 2 Has anyone indicated that they would like to make a 3 comment, Craig? 4 MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: No, at this time they haven't, and I'll just go over the directions 5 6 quick. If you'd like to chat, use the chat icon in the lower left-hand corner of the screen indicating 7 that you'd like to speak. If you're a caller and 8 9 you're strictly using a phone, press \*3, and that 10 will indicate to us that you would like to speak, and at that point, I can call your name and unmute 11 12 you. So far no one has indicated an interest 13 in speaking. 14 15 JUDGE MCKENZIE: Let's just switch briefly, do you have the slide about how to make 16 17 written comments? MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: Sure. I'll go back 18 19 to that, yes. There we go. 20 JUDGE MCKENZIE: So if anyone would like 21 to make a written comment, the information is here 22 on this slide. You can visit the PUC's website, 23 which is MN.gov/PUC/consumers/public-comments, and you'll be able to make public comments. 24 25 e-mail address, which is consumer.PUC@state.mn.us,

1 and then there is a U.S. mail address, which is on 2 the screen, in St. Paul. Although, I do believe -- Craig, you can 3 correct me if I'm wrong -- that digital comments are 4 preferred, but mail comments, obviously, are also 5 accepted. And as I said, all comments are given the 6 same weight whether they are made at a hearing or in 7 writing. 8 9 MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: That's correct, 10 Judge. JUDGE MCKENZIE: And so I do not see 11 12 anyone in the chat that has indicated that they would like to speak, and, again, anyone on the 13 phone, use \*3 to indicate --14 15 So I see a comment in the chat, which is, I guess, more of a question from Judy Helgen, "Who 16 17 will monitor the casks 100 year or more from now?" 18 And I don't know if anyone from Xcel, or Jenna, if you would like to answer that question. 19 20 MS. JENNA NESS: Yeah, we talk about that 21 in the EIS to the extent we can. Of course, we 22 can't predict what it will look like 100 years from 23 now, but to -- excuse me. So, yeah, we do discuss the outcomes if monitoring does continue and if it 24

doesn't. And we do admit, if monitoring doesn't

25

continue, more -- from 100 years from now, the impact would be significant. But as that's in the process and we expect there to be permanent storage and monitoring within the next 100 years at least. Those impacts will be anticipated to be minimal, but we don't have a specific answer just because it's unknown at this point.

MS. PAM GORMAN PROCHASKA: Yeah. I think
I can add a few comments about that. Obviously,
we're going to store the fuel at our site and
monitor it and take care of it as long as we're
there. And so the company will be there.

If Xcel would like to elaborate?

In the meantime, we are continuing to work with Department of Energy on their responsibility and, actually, legal obligation to take the fuel. So there's currently a consent-based siting program taking place with the Department of Energy. And so we are heavily leading the industry as we work with them to come up with an interim and permanent solution, and anticipate moving that fuel from Prairie Island/Monticello to that facility once it's available.

But in the meantime, it will be our responsibility, and we will continue to monitor and

1	care for it with oversight by the Nuclear Regulatory
2	Commission as long as the fuel remains on site.
3	JUDGE MCKENZIE: Thank you.
4	And do we have anyone on the phone,
5	Craig, who's indicated that they would like to
6	speak?
7	MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: We don't.
8	JUDGE MCKENZIE: I am going to, sort of,
9	issue a last call. Craig, if you could just move to
10	the instructions once again. If anyone would on
11	the phone would like to add yourself, please press
12	*3, and anyone in the Webex, you can indicate in the
13	chat icon that you would like to speak and you will
14	be unmuted.
15	And I am not seeing anyone else
16	indicating that they would that they would like
17	to speak, so I will just ask Craig to put up the
18	written comment information one more time before we
19	adjourn. Sorry, Craig.
20	MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: No, you're fine.
21	You're fine.
22	JUDGE MCKENZIE: So, again, written
23	comments are accepted until the 10th. There is also
24	an in-person meeting tomorrow in Red Wing.
25	So, Jenna, yes, I see a hand.

1	MS. JENNA NESS: Yes. Judy posted
2	something else in the chat. I think she might be
3	referring to something I said. It might be helpful
4	to get some elaboration if you're willing to come
5	off mute.
6	Otherwise, I don't know if Pam has
7	anything else to add.
8	MR. CRAIG JANEZICH: Maybe
9	MS. PAM GORMAN PROCHASKA: Maybe I said
10	it, I certainly didn't if I said it, I'm not
11	sure, maybe I didn't use the right words.
12	But clearly Xcel Energy, if we own that
13	site, we're going to take care of the casks and take
14	care of the site. And so we aren't going anywhere,
15	and we'll take care of it 100 years from now if the
16	fuel hasn't been moved by the Department of Energy.
17	But in the meantime, we're going to continue to work
18	with them to live up to that legal obligation.
19	So if I said it, I apologize. That was
20	not a good use of words.
21	JUDGE MCKENZIE: All right. Well, thank
22	you, everyone, for attending this evening. I
23	appreciate everyone's attendance, and the public's
24	participation in these proceedings is very
25	important. It's important to me as I write my

1	report, I know it is also important to the
2	Commission, and so I do appreciate your time and
3	attention today.
4	And so seeing that we have no one in line
5	to make public comments, I will adjourn the hearing.
6	Thank you very much.
7	(Public hearing adjourned at 6:29 p.m.)
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                       REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
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                     I, Christine Simons, do hereby
         certify that the above and foregoing transcript,
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          consisting of the preceding 21 pages is a
12
         correct transcript of my stenographic notes, and is
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         a full, true and complete transcript of the
14
         proceedings to the best of my ability.
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                       Dated March 29, 2025.
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                           /s/ Christine Simons
                           CHRISTINE SIMONS
                           Registered Merit Reporter
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vii tuai i ubiic iieai iiig -	3-24-23	an le Islanu - 24-06 - 3-24	-23	Wai Cli 24, 202.
	Although (1)	9:7	CN 24 69 (1)	aavan (1)
	Although (1)		CN-24-68 (1)	cover (1)
*	17:3	better (1)	4:7	15:13
	always (2)	9:22	comfortable (1)	<b>CRAIG</b> (19)
*3 (3)	13:10,13	beyond (1)	15:22	6:7,10,11;10:14;
16:9;17:14;19:12	Amanda (1)	9:6	coming (1)	14:10,13,21;16:3,4,
10.9,17.14,19.12	13:10	bit (1)	9:21	18;17:3,9;19:5,7,9,17,
<b>A</b>	Analysis (1)	6:4	comment (9)	19,20;20:8
$\mathbf{A}$	13:19	brief (1)	10:4;15:12,12,21;	current (2)
ability (1)	analyzes (1)	5:8	16:1,3,21;17:15;	12:14,20
15:16	14:1	briefly (1)	19:18	currently (5)
able (3)	anticipate (4)	16:16	comments (17)	10:21,25;11:7;12:5;
9:21;13:2;16:24	7:8;11:1,19;18:21		4:20;5:10,11;7:18,	18:17
	anticipated (1)	C	19;15:9,17,19,23;	customers (1)
accepted (2)	18:5		16:17,24;17:4,5,6;	9:7
17:6;19:23	anticipating (1)	call (2)	18:10;19:23;21:5	cycle (1)
accepting (1)	10:15	16:11;19:9	Commerce (3)	11:17
7:18		*		11.17
access (2)	apologize (1)	called (1)	4:15;13:18;14:23	ъ
8:2,3	20:19	11:9	Commission (16)	D
accurately (2)	Application (7)	caller (1)	4:14,22,24,25;5:19;	
5:17,25	4:3;7:5;9:3,11;	16:8	6:12,16;7:10,13,16;	date (1)
,	10:12;11:14;13:9	can (23)	8:14;11:6,18;14:6;	12:2
acronyms (1)	applications (2)	5:25;6:2;7:20;8:1,2,	19:2;21:2	dates (1)
5:24	11:16;12:9	5,10,14;12:11,17,24,	Commission's (1)	11:12
actually (1)			14:25	
18:16	appreciate (2)	25;13:4,9;14:19,23;		deadline (1)
add (3)	20:23;21:2	15:2;16:11,22;17:3,	communities (1)	15:23
18:10;19:11;20:7	approval (2)	21;18:10;19:12	9:8	decision (7)
adding (1)	7:1;12:21	canisters (3)	community (1)	5:1;6:16,18;7:16;
9:18	approved (1)	11:1;12:18,21	5:3	8:14;10:15;14:7
Additional (4)	9:16	capacity (1)	company (2)	denial (1)
	April (3)	5:5	10:11;18:13	6:20
4:4;5:4;9:12;12:21	7:19;10:5;15:23	care (5)	conclusions (1)	denying (1)
address (3)	area (2)	18:12;19:1;20:13,	4:23	6:25
6:14;16:25;17:1	8:22;13:2			
adequacy (1)	*	14,15	conducted (1)	Department (6)
6:21	associated (1)	case (2)	9:15	4:15;13:18;14:22;
adjourn (2)	13:25	5:9;8:4	consent-based (1)	18:15,18;20:16
19:19;21:5	attendance (1)	Cask (2)	18:17	determination (2)
adjourned (1)	20:23	4:4;10:1	consequences (1)	5:20;7:14
21:7	attending (1)	casks (4)	6:25	determine (1)
	20:22	10:25;12:18;17:17;	consider (2)	6:17
Administrative (4)	attention (1)	20:13	7:10;8:14	digital (1)
4:10,11,12;7:9	21:3		considered (1)	17:4
admit (1)		catch (1)		
17:25	Attorney (1)	14:18	15:24	direct (1)
affiliated (1)	4:15	certainly (1)	consumerPUC@statemnus (1)	6:19
4:13	August (1)	20:10	16:25	directions (1)
afternoon (1)	7:12	Certificate (12)	contact (1)	16:5
8:19	available (2)	4:4;6:18,24;7:11;	6:13	discuss (1)
	13:23;18:23	9:3;10:1,7,11,23;	continue (4)	17:23
Again (8)	13.23,10.23	13:25;14:3,9	17:24;18:1,25;	Docket (11)
9:2,4;10:14,19;	В		20:17	
15:18;17:13;19:10,22	D	change (1)		4:7,7;6:15;7:22,23;
agenda (1)		10:24	continuing (1)	8:5,6,11,11,15,24
6:4	back (1)	changes (3)	18:14	document (2)
ahead (1)	16:18	11:22,22,25	convening (1)	13:25;14:5
6:9	background (1)	chat (7)	4:2	done (1)
0:9 <b>ALJ</b> (1)	12:12	14:18;16:6,6;17:12,	copy (2)	10:7
3 5	based (2)	15;19:13;20:2	15:1,3	down (1)
8:13	6:18;9:14	clarify (1)	corner (1)	6:1
allows (1)		• , ,		
11:21	basically (1)	14:16	16:7	Dry (4)
along (2)	15:14	clearly (2)	course (1)	4:4;9:19;10:1,21
	believes (1)	5:22;20:12	17:21	_
			4 (2)	${f E}$
10:2;11:4	9:5	closer (1)	court (2)	IL.
10:2;11:4 alternative (1)	9:5			L
10:2;11:4 alternative (1) 6:22	9:5 <b>berm (2)</b>	8:8	5:12,25	
10:2;11:4 alternative (1)	9:5			earthen (2) 13:4,5

Virtual Public Hearing	- 3-24-25 Pra	airie Island - 24-68 - 3-24	4-25	March 24, 2025
D 1 4 (1)	19 (4)	0 1(1)	10.10	• 4 4(1)
eDocket (1)	expanding (1)	foreground (1)	18:19	intent (1)
8:10	10:1	12:13	Helgen (1)	12:6
eDockets (1)	expect (1)	forth (1)	17:16	interest (2)
14:11	18:3	4:23	Hello (1)	9:7;16:13
effect (1)	explain (1)	forward (1)	6:10	interim (1)
7:17	9:22	6:5		18:20
			helpful (2)	
EIS (5)	extend (2)	free (1)	8:6;20:3	into (1)
13:21,23;14:1,25;	9:12;11:11	15:21	here's (2)	15:2
17:21	extended (2)	<b>Fuel (8)</b>	6:4;12:11	introduce (1)
elaborate (1)	10:13;13:12	4:6;9:10;12:15;	Hi (1)	6:5
18:8	extending (2)	18:11,17,21;19:2;	13:17	introductions (1)
elaboration (1)	9:9;11:6	20:16	high-level (1)	5:8
20:4	extension (3)	<b>full</b> (1)	9:4	involved (2)
else (3)	9:14;11:2;12:23	8:4	hit (1)	5:9;14:3
19:15;20:2,7	extent (1)	future (1)	8:12	ISFSI (3)
e-mail (5)	17:21	6:21	human (1)	10:24;12:16;13:6
	17.21	0.21	14:1	
6:13;7:21;8:7;15:2;	10		14.1	Island (5)
16:25	$\mathbf{F}$	G	_	4:5;5:6;9:6,11;
encourage (2)			- I	10:19
5:11;15:11	facilities (1)	general (3)		Island/Monticello (1)
end (6)	6:11	7:4;8:21;13:9	icon (2)	18:22
10:15;11:15,20;	facility (3)	General's (1)	16:6;19:13	issue (2)
12:5,19;15:18	6:23;10:22;18:22	4:15	impact (5)	7:9;19:9
Energy (10)	<b>fact</b> (2)	Generating (2)	6:20,21;8:3;10:3;	issued (3)
4:3,14;8:17,20;9:5;	4:23;7:25	4:5;5:6	18:2	7:11;10:4;12:2
13:19;18:15,19;	far (1)	given (2)	impacts (2)	,
20:12,16				J
	16:13	15:19;17:6	14:2;18:5	J
entire (1)	favorable (1)	giving (1)	impede (1)	
13:6	6:24	8:23	7:2	JANEZICH (11)
entity (1)	February (3)	goes (1)	important (5)	6:7,10,11;14:13,21;
4:12	9:4;10:4,10	10:2	5:16,21;20:25,25;	16:4,18;17:9;19:7,20;
enunciate (1)	federal/state (1)	Good (4)	21:1	20:8
5:22	7:3	8:18;12:11;15:8;	include (1)	Jenna (8)
environment (1)	feel (1)	20:20	7:22	13:17,17;14:15,22;
9:8	15:21	GORMAN (4)	increase (1)	17:19,20;19:25;20:1
environmental (6)	fence (1)	8:18,20;18:9;20:9	9:10	<b>Jepson</b> (1)
8:3;10:3;13:19,20,	13:1			13:10
		government (3)	incredibly (1)	
24;14:2	few (2)	4:13;7:3,3	15:5	<b>JUDGE</b> (15)
equipment (1)	15:10;18:10	granting (1)	Independent (3)	4:1,10;6:8,9;7:9;
11:22	<b>file</b> (1)	6:24	4:6,12;12:15	15:7,8;16:15,20;
even (1)	11:14	great (1)	indicate (3)	17:10,11;19:3,8,22;
5:13		12:25		20:21
	filed (4)		16:10;17:14;19:12	
evening (1)	8:6;9:3;10:11;12:7	guess (4)	indicated (4)	Judy (2)
20:22	filing (1)	5:14;6:3;15:10;	16:2,13;17:12;19:5	17:16;20:1
everyone (5)	13:12	17:16	indicating (2)	July (2)
4:9;5:11,21,22;	final (2)	gun (1)	16:7;19:16	7:10,11
20:22	5:1;13:23	6:3	indirect (1)	jumped (1)
= -	*	0.3		
everyone's (1)	find (1)	TT	6:20	6:3
20:23	14:24	H	industry (1)	
evidence (2)	findings (1)		18:19	K
6:23;7:1	4:23	hand (2)	information (6)	
evidentiary (2)	fine (2)	8:16;19:25	6:13;14:18,24;	kind (3)
4:19,21	19:20,21	heard (1)	15:14;16:21;19:18	9:23;13:5;14:17
excuse (2)	<b>five</b> (1)	15:14	in-person (3)	_
14:9;17:23	11:21	hearing (11)	7:8;15:13;19:24	${f L}$
existing (3)	fleet (1)	4:2,18,19,21;5:13;	input (1)	
5:5;9:19;10:1	8:21	7:7,8;15:13;17:7;	5:3	large (1)
exists (1)	focus (1)	21:5,7	Installation (3)	15:5
9:20	7:24	Hearings (2)	4:6;5:5;12:15	last (5)
expand (1)	follow (1)	4:11,12	instructions (1)	8:1,2;12:22;13:15;
10:23	8:8	hearing's (1)	19:10	19:9
				Law (3)
expanded (1)	footprint (3)	3.7	integrated (1)	
expanded (1)	footprint (3)	5:2	integrated (1)	
<b>expanded (1)</b> 10:8	9:20;10:24;12:14	heavily (1)	9:16	4:10,23;7:9

virtual Public Hearing	- 3-24-25 118	urie Island - 24-08 - 3-24	1-23	March 24, 2025
loading (2)	15.22	19.21	7.5.12.1.17.5.	noonlo (1)
leading (2)	15:22	18:21	7:5;13:1;17:5;	people (1)
13:11;18:19	March (3)	much (2)	18:10	6:5
least (1)	7:5,7,8	15:11;21:6	off (2)	perimeter (1)
18:4	Matter (2)	mute (1)	12:12;20:5	13:3
left-hand (1)	4:3,19	20:5	Office (3)	period (1)
16:7	may (2)	myself (1)	4:11,11,16	10:4
legal (2)	11:23,25	13:10	official (1)	permanent (2)
18:16;20:18	Maybe (3)		5:16	18:3,21
legislative (2)	20:8,9,11	N	once (2)	person (1)
7:14;10:16	MCKENZIE (13)		18:22;19:10	15:20
legislature (1)	4:1,10;6:8,9;15:7,8;	name (4)	one (7)	personally (1)
7:14	16:15,20;17:11;19:3,	4:9;6:11;13:17;	5:23;7:14;12:3;	15:2
library (1)	8,22;20:21	16:11	15:3;16:13;19:18;	phone (5)
15:1	mean (1)	names (1)	21:4	6:14;16:9;17:14;
license (10)	12:24	5:24	online (1)	19:4,11
11:6,7,10,11,19,24;	meaning (1)	navigate (1)	7:21	picture (3)
12:1,3,8,20	13:21	14:23	open (1)	9:20,22;10:20
licenses (1)	meantime (3)	necessarily (1)	10:5	place (1)
11:7	18:14,24;20:17	5:15	operation (6)	18:18
life (1)	meeting (1)	Need (12)	9:5,9,13;10:9,13;	places (1)
11:2	19:24	4:4;6:17,18;7:11;	12:22	5:24
limited (1)	Megan (1)	9:3,10;10:1,11,23;	operations (1)	plan (1)
15:4	4:9	14:1,3,9	8:21	9:16
line (1)	members (1)	needs (1)	option (1)	planner (1)
21:4	16:1	10:7	8:9	6:11
links (1)	mentioned (4)	NESS (6)	Otherwise (1)	planning (3)
14:20	10:6,10;12:17,20	13:17,18;14:15,22;	20:6	8:22;9:14;14:5
little (1)	midst (1)	17:20;20:1	out (5)	Plant (6)
6:4	12:8	new (1)	5:24;6:2;13:5,10,13	4:5;5:6;9:6,10;12:4,
live (1)	Midwest (1)	10:11	outages (1)	12
20:18	9:15	next (14)	11:24	please (7)
load (1)	might (4)	6:3;9:1,24;10:18,	outcomes (1)	5:23,24;6:9;9:1;
10:22	10:20;13:15;20:2,3		17:24	
		20;11:3,8;12:10;13:7,		13:22;15:6;19:11
loaded (1)	minimal (1)	15,22;14:8;15:6;18:4	over (4)	pm (2)
12:18	18:5	nine (1)	4:18;8:16;10:14;	7:20;21:7
local (1)	Minnesota (2)	12:2	16:5	point (2)
7:3	9:17.25	note (1)	oversight (1)	16:11;18:7
located (1)		15:19	19:1	policy (1)
	MNgov/PUC/consumers/public-comments (1)			
10:25	16:23	notes (1)	overview (2)	8:22
long (2)	models (1)	15:10	8:23;9:2	portion (2)
18:12;19:2	9:15	notified (1)	own (1)	5:10;6:3
look (4)	modify (1)	8:7	20:12	post (2)
6:17,19;15:2;17:22	7:15	NRC (6)		14:13,19
			P	*
looking (1)	monitor (4)	11:9,11,14,23;12:2,	<b>r</b>	posted (3)
11:13	13:2;17:17;18:12,	7		14:11,19;20:1
looks (2)	25	Nuclear (7)	Pam (6)	potential (1)
9:21;12:16	monitoring (3)	4:5;5:6;8:22;11:5,	8:16,18,19;18:9;	14:1
lot (1)	17:24,25;18:4	18;12:4;19:1	20:6,9	Prairie (6)
14:20	months (1)	Number (7)	paper (1)	4:5;5:6;9:6,11;
lower (1)	11:17	4:7;6:14;7:22,23;	15:1	10:19;18:22
16:7	Monticello (1)	8:11,11;12:8	part (4)	predict (1)
	12:4	numbers (1)	5:19;9:9;11:17;	17:22
$\mathbf{M}$	more (7)	8:24	12:22	preferred (1)
	6:22,24;14:24;		participate (1)	17:5
mail (3)		0	7:25	
	17:16,17;18:1;19:18			present (1)
7:21;17:1,5	most (1)		participation (1)	5:12
makes (2)	15:22	OAH (2)	20:24	presentation (1)
6:16;7:13	move (5)	4:7;7:23	parties (1)	14:12
making (2)	5:10;6:5;15:9,25;	obligation (2)	5:9	presentations (2)
5:18;8:14	19:9	18:16;20:18		5:8;6:6
		*	party (1)	
manager (2)	moved (1)	obtain (1)	4:16	preside (1)
8:21;13:20	20:16	5:2	Paul (1)	4:18
manner (1)	moving (1)	Obviously (4)	17:2	press (2)
` ′				- ` '

virtual Public Hearing .	- 3-24-25 F17	airie Isiana - 24-08 - 3-24	-25	March 24, 2025
1601011	II (2)	20 11 21	4.43	12.10
16:9;19:11	really (2)	20:11,21	sort (1)	13:19
previous (1)	11:21;13:11	rules (1)	19:8	Thanks (1)
10:7	reasonable (1)	7:2	space (1)	8:19
previously (1)	6:22	run (1)	8:11	though (1)
10:6		10:5		
	receive (1)	10:5	speak (8)	5:13
printed (1)	8:7		5:21,23;16:8,10;	three (2)
15:3	received (1)	S	17:13;19:6,13,17	10:22;12:19
probable (1)	12:4		speaking (1)	timeline (1)
6:19	recently (1)	same (4)	16:14	7:4
proceeding (2)	9:16	15:14,14,19;17:7	specific (1)	today (5)
4:16;5:16	recommendation (2)	schedule (2)	18:6	5:7;7:5;9:20;15:15;
proceedings (1)	4:24;5:1	10:15;11:13	spell (1)	21:3
20:24	recommendations (1)	screen (2)	5:24	tomorrow (2)
process (4)	5:18	16:7;17:2	Spent (3)	15:13;19:24
11:5,5,8;18:3	record (6)	search (1)	4:6;9:10;12:15	transcript (1)
PROCHASKA (4)	4:2,20;6:23;7:1;8:4,	8:12	St (1)	5:18
8:18,20;18:9;20:9	13	security (2)	17:2	two (1)
program (1)	recorded (1)	13:1,2	start (2)	12:13
18:18	5:17	seeing (2)	6:2,8	typically (1)
project (9)	Red (2)	19:15;21:4	state (5)	11:16
5:4;8:23;13:11,20,	15:1;19:24	seeking (1)	4:13;9:7,25;11:4,4	
21,24;14:2,4,23	reference (1)	12:21	statement (2)	$\mathbf{U}$
proposal (1)	8:25	send (2)	8:3;10:3	
13:14				ultimatal (1)
	referring (1)	7:20;15:1	statute (1)	ultimately (1)
proposed (2)	20:3	serve (1)	9:25	5:19
5:4;6:23	regards (1)	9:8	stay (1)	under (1)
provide (1)	5:3	session (2)	10:16	12:6
12:22	regulations (1)	7:15;10:17	Storage (12)	units (2)
provided (1)	7:2	setting (1)	4:4,6;5:5;9:11,18,	12:6,7
15:23	Regulatory (3)	4:22	19;10:2,8,21;12:15;	unknown (1)
prudent (1)	11:6,18;19:1	several (1)	13:12;18:3	18:7
6:22	remains (1)	7:24	store (1)	unmute (1)
public (15)	19:2	show (1)	18:11	16:11
4:2,14,18,22,24;5:3,	renewal (2)	8:12	strictly (1)	unmuted (1)
10;6:12;7:16;15:1,10;	11:10;12:9	shows (4)	16:9	19:14
16:1,24;21:5,7	renewals (1)	7:1,4;8:1,2	submit (1)	up (6)
public's (1)	12:3	side (1)	4:21	9:21:12:19:15:18;
20:23	renewed (3)	11:4	subscribe (1)	18:20;19:17;20:18
PUC (5)	11:19,23;12:1	sidenote (1)	8:5	upgrade (1)
4:7,17;7:22;9:17;	report (3)	9:18	subsequent (3)	11:22
10:12	4:22;7:9;21:1	significant (1)	11:9;12:3,8	Upper (1)
<b>PUC's (1)</b>	reporter (2)	18:2	summary (2)	9:15
16:22	5:12,25	site (6)	9:5,23	use (6)
purpose (1)	requested (2)	9:19;10:8;18:11;	support (1)	5:18;8:10;16:6;
5:2	4:17,18	19:2;20:13,14	11:1	17:14;20:11,20
put (3)	requires (1)	siting (1)	supported (1)	used (1)
8:10;15:17;19:17	9:25	18:18	10:9	14:6
3.10,10.17,17.17	resource (2)	slide (19)	sure (3)	using (1)
Q	9:14,16	6:13;7:4;8:1,2,24;	15:17;16:18;20:11	16:9
	responsibility (2)	9:1,24;10:18,20;11:3;	surrounded (2)	Utilities (5)
quarter (1)	18:16,25	12:10;13:7,15,22;	13:1,3	4:14,22,25;6:12;
11:15	result (1)	14:8;15:6,18;16:16,	surrounds (1)	7:16
quick (2)	6:20	22	13:6	
				$\mathbf{v}$
14:17;16:6	reversed (1)	slides (1)	switch (1)	•
_	7:6	14:17	16:15	
R	review (10)	SLR (2)	systems (1)	via (1)
	4:20;5:19;7:15;8:4;	11:10,14	10:21	7:21
reach (2)	10:16;11:17;12:6;	society (1)		virtual (1)
			T	
13:10,13	13:19,20,25	6:25	1	7:7
reactors (1)	reviewed (1)	solution (1)		visit (1)
12:13	14:5	18:21	talk (1)	16:22
ready (1)	right (5)	Sorry (1)	17:20	visual (1)
6:7	11:16;12:12;14:21;	19:19	team (1)	12:11
0.7	11.10,12.12,14.21,	17.17	cam (1)	12.11
L	II.	1	I .	I .

Virtual Public Hearing	- 3-24-25	airie Island - 24-68 - 3-24	-23	March 24, 2025
		4.20 (1)		
***	-	<b>4:30 (1)</b> 7:20		
$\mathbf{W}$	1	7.20		
W 1 (2)	100 (5)	5		
Webex (2)	100 (5)	3		
15:20;19:12	17:17,22;18:1,4;	52 (2)		
webpage (1)	20:15	10:21;12:17		
14:24	10th (4)	53 (1)		
website (5)	7:19;10:5;15:23;	11:2		
7:21;8:10;14:23,25;	19:23	54 (3)		
16:22	13 (1)	9:13;11:2,12		
weight (2)	12:6	7.13,11.2,12		
15:19;17:7	18 (1)	6		
Welcome (2)	11:16	0		
4:9;13:13	1st (1)	6:29 (1)		
what's (1)	7:10	21:7		
8:8	2	64 (1)		
whole (1)	<u> </u>	12:19		
4:21	20 (2)	12.17		
who's (1)	20 (3)	7		
19:5	9:12;10:12;12:22	,		
willing (1)	2024 (3)	7th (1)		
20:4 Wing (2)	9:4;10:10;12:5	10:10		
Wing (2) 15:1;19:24	2025 (3)	10.10		
15:1;19:24 wish (1)	7:19;10:4,16			
16:1	<b>2026 (2)</b> 10:17;11:15			
within (2)				
9:19;18:4	<b>2028</b> ( <b>2</b> ) 11:20,24			
9:19;18:4 words (2)	2033 (3)			
20:11,20	9:6;10:9;11:25			
work (4)	2033-34 (1)			
8:21;18:15,20;	9:13			
20:17	2053 (2)			
works (1)	9:13;11:11			
13:11	20-year (2)			
write (2)	9:14;11:2			
5:25;20:25	24 (1)			
writing (2)	11:17			
15:21;17:8	24-68 (2)			
written (6)	7:23;8:11			
7:18;15:16;16:17,	24th (2)			
21;19:18,22	7:5,7			
wrong (1)	25-2500-39971 (2)			
17:4	4:8;7:23			
wrote (1)	25th (1)			
13:21	7:8			
	28 (1)			
X	12:7			
	_			
<b>Xcel (8)</b>	3			
4:3,14;8:16,20;9:5;				
17:18;18:8;20:12	3/quarter (1)			
¥7	11:15			
Y	33 (2)			
	11:2,8			
year (4)	34 (7)			
10:23;12:5,19;	9:6;10:9;11:1,2,8,			
17:17	25;12:21			
years (8)	4			
9:12;10:12;11:21;	4			
12:22;17:22;18:1,4;	4 (1)			
20:15	4 (1)			
	11:15			