

Anyone may intervene in this proceeding based on this draft EIS. You must file your request to intervene as specified above.¹ You do not need intervenor status to have your comments considered.

The draft EIS has been placed in the public files of the FERC and is available for public inspection at: Federal Regulatory Energy Commission, Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, 888 First Street, NE., Room 2A, Washington, DC 20426, (202) 208-1371.

A limited number of copies of the draft EIS are available from the Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch identified above. In addition, the draft EIS has been mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, public interest groups, individuals, and affected landowners who requested a copy of the draft EIS; public libraries; newspapers; and parties to this proceeding.

Additional information about the proposed project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs at (202) 208-1088 or on the FERC Web site (www.ferc.gov) using the "RIMS" link to information in the docket numbers. Click on the "RIMS" link, select "Docket#" from the RIMS menu, and follow the instructions. For assistance with access to RIMS, the RIMS helpline can be reached at (202) 208-2222.

Similarly, the "CIPS" link on the FERC internet website provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings. From the FERC Internet Web site, click on the "CIPS" link, select "Docket#" from the CIPS menu, and follow the instructions. For assistance with access to CIPS, the CIPS helpline can be reached at (202) 208-2474.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Notice of Applications Acceptance for Filing, Soliciting Motions To Intervene and Protests, Ready for Environmental Analysis, and Soliciting Comments, Recommendations, Terms and Conditions, and Prescriptions

December 7, 2001.

Take notice that the following hydroelectric applications have been filed with the Commission and are available for public inspection.

a. *Type of Applications:* Three new major licenses.

b. *Project Nos.:* 1982-017, 2567-009, and 2670-014.

c. *Date Filed:* June 21, 1996, June 22, 1998, and August 24, 1998, respectively.

d. *Applicant:* Northern States Power Company (NSP).

e. *Names of Projects:* Holcombe, Wissota, and Dells.

f. *Location:* On the Chippewa River in Chippewa, Rusk, and Eau Claire Counties, Wisconsin. The Holcombe and Wissota projects do not utilize any federal lands, but the Dells Project utilizes 6.6 acres of federal lands, administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

g. *Filed Pursuant to:* Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. 791(a)-825(r).

h. *Applicant Contact:* Mr. Lloyd Everhart, Northern States Power Company, 100 North Barstow Street, P.O. Box 8, Eau Claire, WI 54702-0008, 715-839-2692.

i. *FERC Contact:* Mark Pawlowski; mark.pawlowski@ferc.fed.us, 202-219-2795.

j. *Deadline for Filing Comments, Motions to Intervene, Recommendations, Terms and Conditions, and Prescriptions:* 60 days from the issuance date of this notice.

All documents (original and eight copies) should be filed with: Linwood A. Watson, Jr., Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426. Comments, protests and interventions may be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See, 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's Web site under the "e-Filing" link.

The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure require all interveners filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on the official service list for the project. Further, if an intervenor files comments or documents with the Commission relating to the merits of an issue that

may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, the intervenor also must serve a copy of the document on that resource agency.

k. *Status of Environmental Analysis:* These applications have been accepted for filing and are ready for environmental analysis at this time.

l. *Description of the Projects* (from upstream to downstream):

The Holcombe Project consists of: (1) Four earthen embankments that include: The 700-foot-long North Dike and 200-foot-long South Dike, which are part of the Holcombe Dam; and the 4,600-foot-long Holcombe Dike and 1,900-foot-long Callahan Dike, which serve as flood control measures and are normally "dry" under normal operations; (2) an impoundment with a maximum surface area of 4,300 acres, a normal water surface elevation of 1045.0 feet NGVD, 46,000 acre-feet of gross storage, and 4,300 acre-feet of usable storage under normal operations; (3) a powerhouse containing 6 vertical propeller-type turbine-generating units with a total installed capacity of 33,000 kW; (4) a 462-foot-long reinforced and mass concrete spillway equipped with 13, 30-foot-wide steel tainter gates; (5) an outdoor substation that directly connects to the NSP systemwide transmission network; and (6) appurtenant facilities. The average annual energy production is 94,021,000 kWh.

The Wissota Project consists of: (1) Six earthen embankments totaling about 7,300 feet long, and a 165-foot-long gravity dam; (2) a 904-foot-long concrete overflow spillway with 13 Stauwerke flap gates, each 64 feet wide by 10.5 feet high; (3) a 6,212-acre reservoir with a normal surface elevation of 897.1 feet NGVD, and a gross storage capacity of 162,971 acre-feet; (4) a powerhouse containing 6 vertical Francis turbine-generator units for a total installed capacity of 36,000 kW; (5) an outdoor substation that directly connects to the NSP systemwide transmission network; and (6) appurtenant facilities. The average annual energy generation is 149,392,471 kWh.

The Dells Project consists of: (1) A 396-foot-long concrete gated spillway dam with 13 Tainter gates; (2) an impoundment with a maximum surface area of 1,183 acres, a normal water surface elevation of 794.4 feet NGVD, 11,158 acre-feet of gross storage, and 2,000 acre-feet of usable storage under normal operations; (3) powerhouse A containing 5 turbine-generator units with a total installed capacity of 8,400 kW; (3) powerhouse B containing 2 turbine-generators with a total installed capacity of 1,100 kW; (4) a 1,884-foot-

¹ Interventions may also be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See the previous discussion on filing comments electronically.

long transmission line; and (5) appurtenant facilities. The average annual energy production is 48,029,165 kWh.

The three Chippewa River projects are operated in close coordination with other Chippewa River hydroelectric projects owned by NSP, primarily in a peaking mode, where the projects are operated fully during the day, and shut down at night for reservoir refill. The three project reservoirs typically operate within a 1 to 2-foot drawdown range. NSP dispatch centers in Minneapolis and Eau Claire coordinate operations, depending on system electrical demand, availability of water (river flow), and costs of energy over the next 24 hours. Hydropower operations are planned one day in advance, with the objective to produce as much energy as possible during the peak electrical demand periods of the day.

As a result of negotiations among NSP, state and federal resource agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Lower Chippewa River Settlement Agreement (LCRSA) was filed with the Commission on February 1, 2001.¹ This agreement, which represents the resolution of all major issues related to the relicensing of the three Chippewa River projects, includes operational and other measures for protection and enhancement of environmental resources at the three projects proposed for relicensing, as well as at three other Chippewa River hydroelectric projects. These other projects include: The Cornell Project (FERC No. 2639-009), Jim Falls Project (FERC No. 2491-025, and Chippewa Falls Project (FERC No. 2440-040). Applications for amendment of license to implement the proposed operational changes at these projects were filed on February 1, 2001.² Our environmental analysis will include an assessment of the proposed environmental protection and enhancement measures at all six Chippewa River projects.

m. Locations of the Applications: Copies of each of the three applications are available for inspection and reproduction at the Commission's Public Reference Room, located at 888 First Street, NE., Room 2A, Washington, DC 20246, or by calling (202) 208-1371. Copies of this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection. This filing may also be viewed on the Web at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "RIMS" link, select "Docket#" and follow the

instructions (call 202-208-2222 for assistance). Copies also are available for inspection and reproduction at the address in item h, above.

n. Filing and Service of Responsive Documents: The Commission directs, pursuant to Section 4.34(b) of the Regulations (see Order No. 533 issued May 8, 1991, 56 FR 23108, May 20, 1991) that all comments, recommendations, terms and conditions, and prescriptions concerning the applications be filed with the Commission within 60 days from the issuance date of this notice. All reply comments must be filed with the Commission within 105 days from the date of this notice. Comments, protests and interventions may be filed electronically via the Internet in lieu of paper. See, 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's Web site under the "e-Filing" link.

Anyone may obtain an extension of time for these deadlines from the Commission only upon a showing of good cause or extraordinary circumstances in accordance with 18 CFR 385.2008.

All filings must: (1) Bear in all capital letters the title "COMMENTS", "REPLY COMMENTS", "RECOMMENDATIONS," "TERMS AND CONDITIONS," or "PRESCRIPTIONS;" (2) set forth in the heading the name of the applicant and the project number(s) of the application to which the filing responds; (3) furnish the name, address, and telephone number of the person submitting the filing; and (4) otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR 385.2001 through 385.2005. All comments, recommendations, terms and conditions or prescriptions must set forth their evidentiary basis and otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 CFR 4.34(b). Agencies may obtain copies of the application directly from the applicant. Each filing must be accompanied by proof of service on all persons listed on the service list prepared by the Commission in this proceeding, in accordance with 18 CFR 4.34(b), and 385.2010.

Linwood A. Watson, Jr.,

Acting Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. RM98-1-000]

Regulations Governing Off-the-Record Communications; Public Notice

December 7, 2001.

This constitutes notice, in accordance with 18 CFR 385.2201(h), of the receipt of exempt and prohibited off-the-record communications.

Order No. 607 (64 FR 51222, September 22, 1999) requires Commission decisional employees, who make or receive an exempt or a prohibited off-the-record communication relevant to the merits of a contested on-the-record proceeding, to deliver a copy of the communication, if written, or a summary of the substance of any oral communication, to the Secretary.

Prohibited communications will be included in a public, non-decisional file associated with, but not part of, the decisional record of the proceeding. Unless the Commission determines that the prohibited communication and any responses thereto should become part of the decisional record, the prohibited off-the-record communication will not be considered by the Commission in reaching its decision. Parties to a proceeding may seek the opportunity to respond to any facts or contentions made in a prohibited off-the-record communication, and may request that the Commission place the prohibited communication and responses thereto in the decisional record. The Commission will grant such requests only when it determines that fairness so requires. Any person identified below as having made a prohibited off-the-record communication should serve the document on all parties listed on the official service list for the applicable proceeding in accordance with Rule 2010, 18 CFR 385.2010.

Exempt off-the-record communications will be included in the decisional record of the proceeding, unless the communication was with a cooperating agency as described by 40 CFR 1501.6, made under 18 CFR 385.2201(e)(1)(v).

The following is a list of exempt and prohibited off-the-record communications received in the Office of the Secretary within the preceding 14 days. Copies of this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection. The documents may be viewed on the Web at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "RIMS" link, select "Docket#" and follow the

¹ This filing was noticed by the Commission on February 14, 2001.

² These filings were also noticed by the Commission on February 14, 2001.