



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC RENEWS OPERATING LICENSES FOR PRAIRIE ISLAND NUCLEAR POWER PLANT FOR AN ADDITIONAL 20 YEARS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has renewed the operating license for the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant, Units 1 and 2, for an additional 20 years. The new licenses will expire for Units 1 and 2 on Aug. 9, 2033, and Oct. 29, 2034, respectively.

The decision to renew the license comes after thorough safety and environmental reviews of the application submitted April 11, 2008, by the plant's operator, Northern States Power Company. The Prairie Island plant has two pressurized-water reactors, located 28 miles southeast of Minneapolis, Minn.

The lessons being learned from events at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station have prompted a comprehensive NRC review of our regulations and practices. The NRC will apply the recommendations from this review, as appropriate, for any changes deemed necessary to improve the safety of operating plants, regardless of whether the plants have been issued renewed operating licenses. Prairie Island, therefore, like all operating plants, will be subject to any rule or policy changes the NRC may make as a result of our post-Fukushima review. The task force reviewing lessons learned from the events in Japan expects to deliver its near-term report and recommendations to the Commission on July 12; a longer-term review's report is expected within approximately six months.

In a letter dated June 14, 2008, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Prairie Island Indian Community (PIIC) signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) for working together to review potential environmental impacts of the proposed license renewal. This was the first MOU dealing with a license renewal environmental review. The MOU recognized PIIC's special expertise and information as it related to historic and archeological resources, socioeconomics, land use, and environmental justice. The NRC retained final authority on the renewal decision.

The NRC held public meetings near the plant on July 30, 2008, and Dec. 16, 2009, to discuss Prairie Island's environmental review. In May, NRC staff concluded there were no environmental impacts that would preclude renewal of the license for environmental reasons.

After careful review of the plant's safety systems and specifications, the staff concluded that there were no safety concerns that would preclude license renewal and that the applicant had effectively demonstrated the capability to manage the effects of plant aging. In addition, NRC conducted inspections of the plant to verify information submitted by the applicant. On Dec. 10, 2009, the Advisory Committee on Reactor Safeguards – an independent body of technical experts that advises the Commission – issued its recommendation that license renewal for Prairie Island should be approved.

The safety and environmental review reports, application and letters relating to the Prairie Island license renewal are available online on the [NRC website](#).

The Prairie Island licenses represent the 67th and 68th reactor licenses renewed by the NRC. A [complete listing of renewal applications](#) can be found online at the NRC website.

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