

8-24-92 ✓
63-3

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Fossil Energy
[Docket No. PP-63-3]

ORDER
AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL PERMIT PP-63
ISSUED TO

NORTHERN STATES POWER COMPANY

BACKGROUND

On June 10, 1991, Northern States Power Company (NSP) applied to the Department of Energy (DOE) to amend the Presidential permit issued on March 6, 1979, in Docket No. PP-63. The facilities previously authorized by Presidential Permit PP-63 consist of one 500,000 volt (500-kV) overhead transmission line which crosses the U.S.-Canadian international border approximately seven and one half miles west of Warroad in Roseau County, Minnesota, and extends approximately 200 miles south of the Canadian border to a substation in the vicinity of Forbes, Minnesota. In its application, NSP requested, among other things, authorization to add approximately 5 acres to the north side of the existing 30-acre Forbes Substation to house static VAR compensators and a 500-kV ring bus.

In processing this application, DOE prepared an environmental assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-0587) which addressed the potential environmental impacts associated with granting or denying the amendment to the existing Presidential permit that would allow NSP to undertake activities associated with upgrading its 500-kV line. The DOE prepared a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) dated April 14, 1992, which documented the rationale

supporting a finding that the proposed action clearly did not constitute a major Federal action which could significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq. The EA and FONSI were based upon the assumption that the 5-acre addition at the Forbes Substation would be placed on the north side of the substation.

After a review of factors relating to electric system reliability, the Office of Fuels Programs' staff recommended on February 27, 1992, that the proposed project would not adversely impact on the reliability of the U.S. electric power supply system as long certain conditions were met.

On April 14, 1992, DOE amended Presidential Permit PP-63 in Docket PP-63-2 and granted NSP the authority to make all changes requested in the June 10, 1991 application.

On June 12, 1992, NSP again applied to DOE to amend Presidential Permit PP-63. In its application, NSP requested that it be authorized to expand the Forbes Substation on the west side instead of on the north side of the substation as requested in NSP's June 10, 1991 application.

Notice of the application was placed in the Federal Register on June 22, 1992, (57 FR 27767) stating that any person desiring to be heard or to make any protest with reference to the application

should file with the DOE a petition to intervene or protest in accordance with the Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 1.8 and 1.0) on or before July 22, 1992. No comments, protests, or petitions to intervene were received.

In compliance with its responsibilities under NEPA, DOE prepared an addendum to the original EA prepared in connection with the amendment in Docket PP-63-2. This addendum addresses only the environmental impacts associated with expanding the Forbes Substation on the west side instead of on the north side. DOE has reviewed the environmental impacts associated with this minor modification and has determined that the conclusions reached in the FONSI prepared in connection with NSP's amendment in Docket No. PP-63-2 remain valid.

The DOE also has determined that the change in the location of the 5-acre addition, from the north side of the Forbes Substation to the west side, does not result in any impact on the reliability of the electric system reliability. Consequently, conclusions reached in the reliability determination February 27, 1992, in Docket PP-63-2 remain valid.

The Secretary of State by letter dated August 13, 1992, and the Secretary of Defense by letter dated August 11, 1992, favorably recommended that the request for amendment be granted as hereinafter provided.

FINDINGS

After a review of the docket, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fuels Programs finds that:

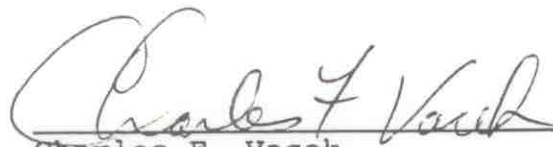
1. The period for public comment was sufficient and appropriate;
2. The conclusions reached in the Finding of No Significant Impact dated April 14, 1992, remain valid; and,
3. The conclusions reached in the reliability determination dated February 27, 1992, remain valid.

ORDER

Pursuant to Executive Order 10485, as amended, Subparagraph 3, Article 2, of the amended Presidential permit issued by the DOE in Docket PP-63-2 on April 14, 1992, is hereby amended to read as follows:

Static VAR compensators and a 500-kV ring bus at the existing Forbes Substation and the addition of approximately 5 acres on the west side of the substation to accommodate this equipment.

Issued in Washington, D.C., August 24, 1992.



Charles F. Vacek
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Fuels Programs
Office of Fossil Energy