

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Fossil Energy
[Docket No. PP-82-2]

AMENDMENT TO
PRESIDENTIAL PERMIT PP-82
ISSUED TO

JOINT OWNERS OF THE HIGHGATE PROJECT

BACKGROUND

On August 2, 1993, the Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. (VELCO), acting as an agent for the Joint Owners of the Highgate Project¹ (Joint Owners), applied to the Department of Energy (DOE) to amend the Presidential permit issued on May 14, 1985, in Docket No. PP-82. The facilities previously authorized by Presidential Permit PP-82 consist of a 7.58-mile long, 120,000-volt transmission line and a back-to-back ac/dc/ac (alternating current, direct current) converter terminal to be operated at import levels of up to 200 megawatts (MW). The line extends from the U.S.-Canadian border near the town of Franklin, Vermont, to the converter station in the town of Highgate, Vermont. In its application, VELCO requested that the Joint Owners be granted an increase in the limit for power imports on the transmission line from 200 MW to 225 MW.

¹The Joint Owners are eight Vermont electric utilities that jointly own facilities authorized by Presidential Permit PP-82. The Joint Owners include: Central Vermont Public Service Corp.; Vermont Public Power Supply Authority; Green Mountain Power Corp.; Vermont Electric Generation and Transmission Cooperative, Inc.; Village of Johnson Electric Light Department; Rochester Electric Light and Power Co., Inc.; Citizens Utilities Company; and the City of Burlington Electric Light Department.

The DOE has assessed the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed amendment and has determined that this action is among those classes of actions not normally requiring preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement and, therefore, is eligible for categorical exclusion under Appendix B to Subpart D, paragraph B4.11 of the DOE regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. A memorandum dated September 22, 1993, documenting the use of this categorical exclusion has been placed in Docket PP-82-2.

After a review of factors relating to electric system reliability, the Office of Fuels Programs' staff recommended that the proposed project would not adversely impact on the reliability of the U.S. electric power supply system as long as certain conditions were met. A staff analysis dated November 26, 1993, and an addendum to that analysis dated February 28, 1994, in support of this recommendation has been placed in Docket PP-82-2.

Notice of the application was placed in the Federal Register on August 16, 1993, (58 FR 43346) 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 385.211, 385.214) on or before September 15, 1993. No comments, protests, or petitions to intervene were received.

The Secretary of State by letter dated December 30, 1993, and the Secretary of Defense by letter dated January 12, 1994, favorably recommended that the request for amendment be granted as hereinafter provided.

FINDINGS

After a review of the docket, the Director, Office of Coal & Electricity finds that:

1. The period for public comment was sufficient and appropriate;
2. The proposed action would have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969;
3. The proposed action would not adversely impact the reliability of the U.S. electric power supply system;
and,
4. The Secretaries of State and Defense favorably recommend granting the proposed amendment.

ORDER

Pursuant to Executive Order 10485, as amended, Article 3 of the Presidential permit issued by the DOE in Docket PP-82 on May 14, 1985, is hereby amended as follows:

A. Subparagraph a of Article 3 shall read:

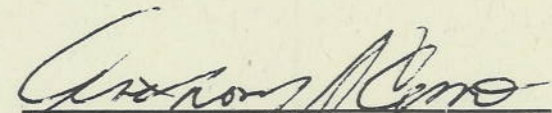
a. The facilities described in Article 2 shall be operated in such a manner that the maximum rate of transmission of electrical energy entering the United States over the facilities authorized herein shall not exceed 225 MW at any time. Operation of the facilities in the import mode at up to 225 MW is conditioned upon the following:

1. Revision of the pre-contingency dispatch of VELCO's switched capacitors as detailed in Table 1 of the DOE Reliability Determination dated November 26, 1993, to prevent post-contingency reactive deficiency and pre-contingency overvoltages;
2. Addition of a new relaying scheme whereby imports through the Highgate converter are reduced (run-back) to 150 MW upon loss of the Sand Bar-Essex 115-kV line;
3. Establishment of an operating agreement between VELCO and the other members of the New England Power Pool

(NEPOOL) to limit imports through the Highgate converter to 200 MW whenever NEPOOL is importing through the Comerford converter;

4. Adherence to the operating procedures outlined in Figure 1 of the DOE Reliability Determination dated November 26, 1993, which limit imports through Highgate for various system operating configurations.
- B. Subparagraphs b, c, and d of Article 3 are deleted.
- C. Subparagraphs e and f of Article 3 are relabeled subparagraphs b and c respectively.

Issued in Washington, D.C., March 1, 1994.



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