

July 16, 2004

Charles Bomberger  
General Manager, Xcel Nuclear Asset Management  
Xcel Energy  
414 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, MN 55401-1927

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OF THE XCEL ENERGY PATHFINDER  
DECOMMISSIONING PLAN

Dear Mr. Bomberger:

On February 17, 2004, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Region IV office received the Pathfinder Decommissioning Plan (DP). After transfer of the project management responsibilities for this site to NRC headquarters, NRC staff initiated the DP acceptance review. Early on in the 90-day acceptance review for completeness, the staff identified a need for additional information related to two areas addressed in the DP. First, additional information was needed to support the statement that "...the site's soil, groundwater, and surface waters are not contaminated and do not require any remediation." Second, the DP needed to include, or incorporate by reference, a Final Status Survey design for the Pathfinder facility. In early June 2004, the staff notified Xcel Energy of these information needs. Xcel Energy subsequently provided NRC with the Characterization Survey Report for the Pathfinder Plant, which contains site characterization data for soils, groundwater and surface waters, and also provided the Final Status Survey design.

The staff now has completed its acceptance review. Based on this acceptance review, we conclude that the DP, supplemented with the information noted above, contains sufficient information to warrant a detailed technical review. The staff may identify areas where additional information is needed in the course of its detailed technical review.

At this time, we believe it is appropriate to comment on the use of the screening criteria. The DP states that Xcel Energy plans to remediate contaminated areas to permit unrestricted use of the Pathfinder site. The proposed dose assessment method for the Pathfinder site employs the application of screening criteria using predefined models for Derived Concentration Guidelines Levels. The staff notes that the Pathfinder DP includes a screening value for Silver-108 which is not among the screening values listed in NUREG-1757. Given the presence of Silver-108, the staff likely will categorize this facility as a Group 4 decommissioning site requiring a site-specific dose assessment.

C. Bomberger

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Consistent with NRC requirements, the staff will issue a Federal Register notice to announce (1) staff consideration of a license amendment, (2) receipt of the DP, (3) opportunity of a hearing, (4) public comment solicitations, and (5) a public meeting which will be held in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on August 31, 2004. The staff expects to complete its review of the DP by February 2005.

If you have any questions, please call me at (301) 415-7295, or Chad Glenn at (301) 415-6722.

Sincerely,

Daniel M. Gillen, Director  
Decommissioning Directorate  
Division of Waste Management  
and Environmental Protection  
Office of Nuclear Material Safety  
and Safeguards

cc:  
Pathfinder distribution list

C. Bomberger

-2-

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/RA/

Daniel M. Gillen, Director  
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cc:

Pathfinder distribution list

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