



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Summer Strand, Chairperson
 Kristy Nieto, Commissioner
 Marcus Hawkins, Commissioner

4822 Madison Yards Way
 P.O. Box 7854
 Madison, WI 53707-7854

Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
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July 22, 2024

Re: Application of Wisconsin Power and Light Company for a Certificate of Authority to Construct and Operate the Riverside Enhancement Project, Consisting of Seven Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engines Capable of Generating up to 17.5 MW total, at its Riverside Energy Center Facility in the Town of Beloit, Rock County, Wisconsin 6680-CE-187

To the Person Addressed:

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (Commission) received an application from Wisconsin Power and Light Company (WPL) for construction of the Riverside Enhancement Project (project). ([PSC REF#: 495931](#)). The project would require the construction of seven Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engines (RICE) capable of generating up to 17.5 MW total, at its Riverside Energy Center (REC) in the Town of Beloit, Rock County. The applicant's request to receive the CA was filed with the Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. §§ 196.02 and 196.49, and Wis. Admin. Code chs. PSC 4 and 112.

This is a Type II action under Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 4.10(2). It requires the preparation of an environmental assessment (EA) to determine if an environmental impact statement (EIS) is necessary under Wis. Stat. § 1.11. Commission staff from the Division of Digital Access, Consumer and Environmental Affairs completed an environmental review of the proposed project and prepared an EA in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to determine if an EIS is necessary. A notification of the Commission's intent to prepare an EA, including a solicitation for comments on the environmental aspects of this project, was mailed to landowners, local and regional media, affected municipal entities, the regional planning commission, and area legislators in the project area on June 24th, 2024. ([PSC REF#: 506192](#)). PSC is sending this letter to property owners near the proposed generating facility site and associated facilities, as well as individuals who have asked to be placed on our mailing list. It is also being sent to public officials in the project area. If you are a municipal clerk and receive this letter, please post it in a location where it can be viewed by the public.

PSC and DNR staff completed a joint-environmental review of the proposed project and prepared an environmental assessment (EA) to determine if an environmental impact statement (EIS) is necessary. The EA is written following the guidelines in Wis. Admin. Code PSC 4.20 and is a review of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project that would affect the quality of the human environment as described in Wis. Stat. § 1.11(2)(c). The EA also

describes ways of mitigating or avoiding some of the expected impacts and concludes with the evaluation of ten items described in Wis. Admin. Code § PSC 4.20(2)(d).

The preliminary determination indicates that no significant impacts on the human or natural environment are likely to occur as a result of the construction and operation of this project. Therefore, preparation of an EIS is not required. Comments regarding this determination can be directed to the contact person listed at the end of this letter.

The remainder of this letter describes the primary impacts of the project and summarizes the conclusions of the EA. To obtain a copy of the EA, please request a copy from the contact person listed at the end of this letter.

Proposed Project

The proposed project would include construction of a new electric generation facility with a total nameplate capacity of 17.5 MW. Major components of the project include seven Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine (RICE) units, which would all be fueled with natural gas. The facilities would also include accessory structures for water preparation and storage, fuel storage and handling, electrical interconnection, and other support functions. The total project footprint area is 4.7 acres of the existing REC property, owned by WPL. Water for nitrogen oxide control and closed cooling would be provided by the existing plant well water supply system. The proposed facilities do not involve transmission facilities as the generating facility would interconnect at the auxiliary power system voltages of the REC and West Riverside Energy Center (WREC). The proposed facilities involve the construction of a new six-inch diameter natural gas pipeline extension from the existing natural gas distribution system. The proposed facility would use the existing pipeline infrastructure upstream of this new extension.

Potential Impacts

Temporary impacts during construction would occur including increased vehicle and truck traffic, noise, and air pollution in the construction areas. An influx of workers, heavy equipment, and materials deliveries to the site would occur using local roads. Construction has the potential to create loose or disturbed soils that could be susceptible to erosion and cause dust. Due to the proposed site already being utilized for generation facilities, construction is not anticipated to cause excessive amounts of dust or erosion. Heavy and oversized traffic are anticipated to use W B R Townline Road to access the site. There is no anticipated adverse impact to roads incurred as a result of project traffic, if any were to occur, the applicant would consult with applicable road authorities for remedy.

Construction of facilities on either the proposed or alternative sites for the project would result in the same amounts of impacts exclusively to previously developed industrial use lands on the REC property. The closest residences to the project area and existing REC facilities are located approximately 150 feet away.

Air emissions from operation of the natural gas-fueled RICE units would primarily include nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, and greenhouse gasses such as carbon dioxide and methane. The emissions from the proposed facilities have the potential to contribute to long term regional and global impacts as the result of greenhouse gas emissions. The project is subject to air permitting requirements put forth by the WI DNR and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Several of the components would be equipped with technologies or design features to assist in reducing emissions, including oxidation catalysts. Emissions of federal criteria pollutants, hazardous air pollution, greenhouse gases, and construction emissions would be controlled by DNR operation and construction permits. DNR permit applications are still under review. Air emissions and necessary control technologies would be the same regardless of selection of the proposed site or the alternative site.

There are currently no significant impacts to natural habitats, endangered or historic resources, or wetlands or waterways that are anticipated to occur as a result of project construction, as all work would be done in previously disturbed areas of an existing power plant. The Endangered Resources (ER) Preliminary Assessment dated February 9, 2024, indicated that an ER Review was not needed because the activities are covered under the Broad Incidental Take Permit/Authorization for No/Low Impact Activities which means there are no required or recommended follow-up actions necessary.

Conclusion

The project as proposed in the application and subsequent filings, including use of the stated construction methods and implementation of the mitigation plans, is not expected to cause any significant environmental effects, regardless of site selected. The use of best management practices and impact mitigation strategies by the applicants could limit some of the long-term adverse effects on natural resources. No significant impacts on the human environment that would warrant the preparation of an EIS are expected if this project were constructed using either of the currently proposed sites. Thus, preparation of an EIS, as described in Wis. Stat. § 1.11, is not required for this project.

Copies of the EA are available upon request, either in electronic or paper format (for a paper copy, an address must be provided). Requests for a copy of the EA should be made to Adam Ingwell at the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin by telephone at (608) 267-9197, by email at adam.ingwell@wisconsin.gov or by regular mail directed to the Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 7854, Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7854.

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Comments on the finding of no significant impact for this proposed project should be made to Adam Ingwell at the address above, by email at adam.ingwell@wisconsin.gov, or through the Commission's web comment form. Go to the Commission's website at <https://psc.wi.gov>, click on "Commission Actions," then click on "File a Public Comment." On the next page, select "File a comment" for case 6680-CE-187.

Please provide any comments by Friday, August 9, 2024.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Adam Ingwell".

Adam Ingwell
Environmental Affairs (WEPA) Coordinator – Supervisor

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