



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
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December 26, 2024

Re: Application of Wisconsin Electric Power Company for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Construct and Operate the South Oak Creek Combustion Turbine Project, Consisting of Five Natural Gas-Fired Single-Cycle Combustion Turbines Generating up to 1100 MW total at the South Oak Creek Facility in the City of Oak Creek, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin 6630-CE-317

To the Person Addressed:

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (Commission) received an application from Wisconsin Electric Power Company (WEPCO) for construction of the Oak Creek Combustion Turbine (OCCT) Project (OCCT or project). ([PSC REF#: 505447](#)). The proposed natural gas-fired electric generating facility would be composed of five Combustion Turbine (CT) generators, each generator having a nominal capacity of 220 megawatts (MW), for a total capacity of approximately 1,100 MW, at WEPCO's existing Oak Creek Generating Site (OGCS) in the City of Oak Creek, Milwaukee County. The applicant's request to receive the Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) was filed with the Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 196.491(3), and Wis. Admin. Code chs. PSC 4 and 111.

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 jointly 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 July 24th, 2024. ([PSC REF#: 509590](#)). The Commission 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.

The Commission 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 1,100 MW. Major components of the project include five CT 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 would be approximately 16-19 acres of the existing OCGS property, owned by WEPCO. Water for nitrogen oxide control and closed cooling would be provided by the existing connection to the City of Oak Creek municipal water supply system. The proposed facilities would require the installation of one new 19 kilovolt (kV) to 138 kV step-up transformer that would connect two of the proposed CTs to the existing 138 kV switchyard. A new 19/345 kV step-up transformer would interconnect the remaining three proposed CTs to the existing 345 kV switchyard. New generation tie-line poles would also be installed to connect the transformers to the existing 138 kV and 345 kV switchyards. The facility would be fueled by the 24-inch diameter natural gas pipeline proposed as the Rochester Lateral Project (6630-CG-139).

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. Heavy and oversized traffic are anticipated to use Elm 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 the 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 OCGS property. The closest residences to the project area and existing OCGS facilities are located approximately 1,500 feet away.

Air emissions from operation of the natural gas-fueled CT units would primarily include nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, and greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane. The greenhouse gas emissions from the proposed facilities have the potential to contribute to long-term regional and global climate change impacts, and overall emissions from the facilities have the potential to result in local and regional public health impacts. 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.

The Endangered Resources (ER) Review dated April 4, 2024 identified multiple endangered and special concern species with the potential to occur in the project area. Based on the information available from the DNR and USFWS, the proposed project layout, and planned activities as described in the application, this project is not expected to have a significant impact on endangered, threatened or special concern species as well as the natural community if the required and recommended actions in the ER Review, which the applicant is committed to, are implemented.

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 facility.

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 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 6630-CE-317.

Please provide any comments by Monday, January 13, 2025.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Ingwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Adam Ingwell
Environmental Affairs (WEPA) Coordinator – Supervisor

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