

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

NOTE

Subject: EPA Comments on Northern Indiana Pub Serv Co – Michigan City Generating Station, Michigan City, IN
Round 10 Draft Assessment Report

To: File

Date: May 8, 2012

1. On p. ii, “Executive Summary,” the word “unlikely” should be removed from the phrase “in the unlikely event of a dike failure...” in the description of the rationale behind assessing Primary No. 1 and Primary No. 2 a Significant hazard potential rating.
2. On p. ii, it should be noted in the basis for a POOR rating for all units that no hydraulic or hydrologic analyses were performed, in addition to lack of geotechnical computations. This comment also pertains to page 12, Section 3.1 “Assessments.”
3. On p. ii, “Executive Summary”, Secondary No.1, Secondary No. 2, BAA, and FSP were all assessed as **LOW** hazard potential, while Primary No. 1 and Primary No. 2 were rated **Significant** hazard potential. The basis for the **Significant** ratings for Primary No. 1 and Primary No. 2 were the potential to discharge to Lake Michigan. However, all ash management units appear to share a similar proximity to Lake Michigan. Contractor must elaborate why, when all units are uniformly close to Lake Michigan, some units pose a higher potential hazard than others.
4. On page ii, “Studies and Analyses,” it may be advantageous in Item #1 to replace “bending moments and applied bending moments” with “structural capacity” so as not to inadvertently exclude any analyses of a full structural analyses.
5. On p. 10, section 2.1.6, the following statement is made: "Given that the BAA does not satisfy the criteria set forth by the U.S. EPA for units requiring further evaluation the Checklist and photos provided herein are for reference only." Please elaborate/provide rationale for not satisfying EPA criteria. If this statement is correct, a condition rating and haz potential rating should not be provided for this unit. Please correct throughout the report.
6. On photo #4:"Discharge pipes leaking waste water into the Primary Settling Basin No. 1." This does not appear to be addressed or identified in either section 2.1.2 or in recommendations section 3. If this is cause for concern, please address in the report.

July 31, 2012

Via E-mail and Certified Mail # 7009 2828 0000 8783 3515

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Dear Mr. Hoffman:

Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments to the GZA Geo-Environmental, Inc. (GZA) draft "NIPSCO-Michigan City Generating Station Coal Ash Impoundments" assessment report which NIPSCO received via e-mail on May 29, 2012. NIPSCO also wishes to express its appreciation to EPA for allowing additional time for its response to this draft report.

NIPSCO understands that EPA's intention is that owners of impoundments are given this opportunity to comment mainly for purposes of factual accuracy and to that end NIPSCO takes no exception to the physical description of the facility or of the impoundments and their functions.

Jurisdiction for Indiana's dam safety programs is held by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). In Section 1.2.6 GZA states, "It is noted that the IDNR does not set size criteria for dams". NIPSCO wishes to point out that under the authority of Indiana Code 14-27-7.5-1, regulations regarding dam safety apply only to structures that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Drainage area above the dam of more than one square mile
- Height in excess of 20 feet
- Impoundment of more than one hundred acre-feet of water

Not only does the IDNR specify size criteria, none of the impoundments at the Michigan City Generating Station meet any of these minimum criteria as regulated structures in the State of Indiana.

NIPSCO recognizes that the operation of such impoundments is not wholly without risk and feels that it is incumbent on an owner to minimize such risk. NIPSCO has developed a plan to respond to recommendations made by GZA in their draft report, and has made significant progress to date. NIPSCO has retained the services of Golder Associates to perform geotechnical and structural analyses. Work in progress or completed includes:

- Survey of impoundment structures- complete
- Seepage and stability analysis- field work completed, analysis in progress
- Hydrologic and hydraulic analysis- field work completed, analysis in progress
- Abandon unused and undocumented piezometers- complete
- Conduct a video survey of pipes within impoundments- 90% complete

- Install level indication on all impoundments- in progress
- Develop an O&M plan including operating procedures, inspections and vegetation maintenance- in progress

Visual inspection by GZA led to the conclusion that “each of the Impoundments appear to be sound and no immediate remedial action appears to be necessary”. NIPSCO understands that because no geotechnical analysis was available at the time of the inspection, EPA’s inspection criteria require that a POOR Condition Rating is necessary.

Because of this and the Company’s desire to develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for the operation and maintenance of the impoundments at the Michigan City Generating Station, NIPSCO has undertaken the work outlined above. To this end, NIPSCO is requesting that EPA delays finalizing its draft report until the results of the stability and hydrologic/hydraulic analyses are available. This will be no later than the end of August 2012. NIPSCO further requests that at such time the conclusions are revisited and the Condition Ratings are appropriately revised.

Thank you for your consideration,

Gregory Costakis
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Northern Indiana Public Service Company