

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION  
AND RECOVERY

AUG 13 2013

Mr. Terry E. Coss, PE  
Director  
Environmental  
Xcel Energy  
414 Nicollet Mall  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

Dear Mr. Coss:

After the catastrophic release of coal ash from the Tennessee Valley Authority's Kingston, Tennessee facility in December 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in collaboration with the States, undertook a nationwide, comprehensive effort to assess the structural integrity of surface impoundments and similar units that contain coal combustion residuals. The purpose of the assessments was to determine whether the units were structurally stable, or whether any corrective measures were needed, and, if so, to work with each facility to secure its commitment to complete any necessary corrective measures.

The units at your facilities have been assessed by EPA contractors who are experts in dam safety, working under the direction of EPA. You have received final reports containing recommendations for corrective measures or studies needed to ensure the ongoing structural integrity of your impoundments and you have submitted action plans to EPA setting out how you plan to implement the recommendations. We thank you for your cooperation throughout this process. We have enclosed a list of the facilities that your company owns or operates at the conclusion of this letter.

EPA's assessment effort was an extraordinary effort undertaken due to the critical need to ensure the structural integrity of these units. EPA was able to bring dam safety experts in quickly and to subject these units to careful scrutiny. The assessments, analyses, reports, and recommendations constitute a critical body of information which serves all of us in our ongoing efforts to protect human health and the environment. For complete information on structural integrity assessments, analyses, reports, and recommendations, please visit EPA's website <http://www.epa.gov/osw/nonhaz/industrial/special/fossil/surveys2/>.

The assessments, however, reflect the condition of each unit at the point in time during which the assessment took place. Going forward, an ongoing, routine program to assess these units and take any needed corrective measures is required to ensure the units' continued structural integrity. The continuing responsibility to ensure that these units are structurally sound lies with

you. However, as you are aware, agencies within your State have an important role in the ongoing monitoring and oversight of these units. We are therefore providing all of the information that you have sent to EPA to the appropriate State agency for their use in their routine monitoring and oversight of these units and expect that they will be the primary point of contact with respect to the continued oversight of these units. However, should EPA become aware of a situation where there is a threat of release or other potential endangerment to human health or the environment, EPA may take appropriate action. In such circumstances, EPA will coordinate with your State agency to ensure that measures protective of human health and the environment are taken in a timely fashion.

We again thank you for your cooperation throughout the assessment process and encourage you to continue your efforts to ensure the structural integrity of these units.

Sincerely,



Barnes Johnson  
Acting Director

Enclosure

### List of Facilities Assessed by EPA

Company	Facility	Location	Round
Northern States Power Co	Sherburne County Power Station	Becker, MN	2
Northern States Power Co	Black Dog Power Station	Burnsville, MN	7