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December 15, 2023

## Nemadji Trail Energy Center Receives Milestone Federal Approval

*NTEC Supports Renewable Energy Expansion & Reliability in Upper Midwest*

LA CROSSE, WI—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has, for the second time, issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Nemadji Trail Energy Center (NTEC) project, which will aid reliability during the clean energy transition and bring family-supporting jobs to the city of Superior, Wis.

The FONSI conclusion document reissuance is an affirmation of the natural gas plant’s essential role as an always-available, critical capacity resource supporting the clean energy transition. The low-emissions, state-of-the-art facility will provide reliable power on-demand, in any weather, with quick-start ability in minutes.

With strong support of local, state and regional labor unions, NTEC will be one of the largest private investments in northern Wisconsin, creating more than 350 construction and 25 permanent jobs in Superior. The regional economic advantages include approximately \$1 million in annual local tax benefit.

“From filling in critical gaps when solar and wind output is low to serving as a safety-first resource during storms and extreme temperatures, NTEC is key to sustaining grid reliability and supporting renewable energy production,” said Dairyland Vice President, Strategic Growth John Carr.

The FONSI affirms that “no significant impacts to the quality of the human environment would result from construction and operation of the facility.” The RUS had previously issued a FONSI for NTEC in June 2021. However, project opponents petitioned the RUS to rescind the FONSI, ultimately causing delays to low-carbon goals and cost increases. A subsequent Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) confirmed the **facility will reduce greenhouse gas emissions** - decreasing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by an average of 964,000 tons per year. (*Study: 1898 & Co.*)

A second public comment period was held to again ensure robust public engagement. Another key project milestone occurred with the Wisconsin DNR’s recent approval of NTEC’s air permit.

“Throughout this multiyear process, the project owners have sought input from all stakeholders, as well as fully complying with state and federal approvals, permitting requirements and extensive environmental reviews,” said Minnesota Power Chief Operating Officer Josh Skelton. “NTEC is an important component of our **EnergyForward** strategy as we continue to advance a clean-energy transition while safeguarding reliable service to our customers.”

Dairyland recently submitted a Letter of Interest for funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s New Empowering Rural America (New ERA) grants program for an extensive portfolio

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of clean energy projects. “The eight solar and four wind energy resources in Wisconsin, Iowa and North Dakota proposed by Dairyland depend on NTEC for on-demand response support,” Carr said.

The 625-megawatt combined-cycle natural gas facility is already engineered to perform on 30% hydrogen when the technology is ready for commercial deployment.

“This project aligns with our commitment to provide affordable, reliable energy to our member-owners through an all-of-the-above energy strategy. Utilizing the latest high-efficiency combustion turbines with the potential to burn hydrogen will ensure this facility remains an important energy source for the region long into the future,” said Basin Electric Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Gavin McCollam.

Approved by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) in 2020 and determined to be in the best public interest, NTEC will move forward to ensure safe, reliable and affordable energy in the region. Facility construction is expected to begin in spring 2024 with a 2028 in-service date. NTEC is planned in partnership with Dairyland, ALLETE’s Minnesota Power and Basin Electric Power Cooperative. For more information, please visit [nemadjitrailenergycenter.com](http://nemadjitrailenergycenter.com).

**About Dairyland Power Cooperative:** Headquartered in La Crosse, Wis., Dairyland provides the wholesale electrical requirements for 24 distribution cooperatives and 27 municipal utilities. These cooperatives and municipals, in turn, supply the energy needs of approximately 700,000 people in the four-state service area. Dairyland delivers electricity via 3,300 miles of transmission lines and 232 substations located throughout the system’s 44,500 square mile service area. Visit [www.DairylandPower.com](http://www.DairylandPower.com).

**About Minnesota Power:** Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 150,000 customers, 14 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at [www.mnpower.com](http://www.mnpower.com).

**About Basin Electric Power Cooperative:** Basin Electric is a consumer-owned, regional cooperative headquartered in Bismarck, ND. It generates and transmits electricity to 141 member rural electric systems in nine states: Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. These member systems distribute electricity to about 3 million consumers. Learn more at [www.basinelectric.com](http://www.basinelectric.com).

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