

EXHIBIT A

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Exhibit A is a description of the project. This exhibit need not include information on project works maintained and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, or any other department or agency of the United States, except for any project works that are proposed to be altered or modified. If the project includes more than one dam with associated facilities, each dam and the associated component parts must be described together as a discrete development. The description for each development must contain:

General Description and Background

The Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam is located at Mile 853.4 in the heart of Minneapolis, Minnesota. The St. Anthony Falls navigation project includes two locks and dams. The Upper St. Anthony Falls with a drop of approximately of 50 feet is located one-half mile upstream from the Lower Lock and Dam. The lower site has a head of approximately 25 feet. The St. Anthony Falls navigation project was constructed in the mid twentieth century to provide commercial navigation access to the terminal and harbor sites located in the 3.5- mile river corridor above St. Anthony Falls. Prior to construction of the project commercial navigation to Minneapolis was limited by the availability of suitable harbor sites in the Mississippi River gorge area downstream from St. Anthony Falls.

The proposed Lower St. Anthony Falls Hydroelectric facility will be located at the Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam operated by the St. Paul District Corps of Engineer. Prior to 1987 a turn of the century powerhouse operated at the Lower St. Anthony Falls site. The original 8.5 MW project was part of the Northern States Power (NSP) St. Anthony Falls Hydroelectric development (FERC Project No. 2056). NSP is now part of "Xcel Energy" and this name is used for current rather than historic reference. The NSP project included both an upper hydroelectric facility and a lower facility located adjacent to the Corps of Engineers Lock and Dam structures. In November 1987 the powerhouse at Lower St. Anthony Falls failed due to internal erosion of the underlying erodible sandstone. An emergency embankment was placed upstream of the powerhouse site to restore the navigation pool between the upper and lower lock structures. Subsequent to the powerhouse failure, NSP evaluated reconstruction of the facility. In November 1990 the FERC approved an amendment to the existing NSP license for the construction of a 16 MW powerhouse at the Lower St. Anthony Falls site. Subsequently in 1994 NSP determined that this development was not feasible and on August 10, 1994 requested that the FERC remove the lower site from the existing license. Removal of the lower site from the existing license for FERC Project No. 2056 was made contingent upon NSP performing certain remedial work to strengthen the emergency embankment adjacent to the Corps of Engineers facility. This remedial work was accomplished in the fall of 2000. The Applicant plans to develop the incremental capacity at the Lower St. Anthony Falls site will not use any lands within the project boundary for Xcel Energy Project No. 2056. The project operation for the proposed project No.12451 will not affect the operation of Project No. 2056.

Corps of Engineers Lock and Dam

As further described below the proposed powerhouse will be situated in the Auxiliary Lock chamber of the Corps of Engineers Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. The following descriptions of the Auxiliary Lock and other non-project facilities at Lower St. Anthony Falls are provided to provide a general understanding of the various structures at the site.

