

11:04:13 **Gary Iocco, Red Wing Mayor**

Thank you, Mr. Chair, committee members, staff, thank you very much for giving me a little bit of time. My name is Gary Iocco, and I'm the Mayor of pretty Red Wing, Minnesota, we're located about an hour south of St. Paul on the Mississippi River, and we are also the home of Red Wing Shoe, Ridell Skates and the inventors of puffed rice and puffed wheat, just so you can get a little information. We also host the Prairie Island nuclear generating facility, as we call it "the plant" in Red Wing, we've had it since, I believe it started planning in the '60s and then it went online. Financially, what does the plant do for us? It pays 42% of our property taxes. In the City of Red Wing. It's one of the largest employers in our area and the jobs they provide are very, very well paid. They contribute to our county over \$3000,000 in funds for security training, for not only our police department, our fire department, but the county sheriffs and county emergency management. Once the license is extended, they're going through that process right now, they will add another billion dollars into that plant for upgrades, which will give us a little bit more power generation and the longevity is well past 2050, I think 2054. The taxes will also go up proportionally on what they pay. In Minnesota, the Dept of Revenue sets what they pay in property taxes based on. In MN you have your land use and your structure. If you're a home it's your home and your land value. For a plant, it's also on equipment, that changes, I think it goes up about 7% this year for Red Wing.

Let's talk about what kind of corporate neighbor Xcel is in our community. They donate to many, many non-profits in our community. I was the chair of our local United Way, and as the Chair you see all the financials from the folks that want to have United Way sponsor them. Xcel is on almost every balance sheet for donations. I sit on a community clinic called the Care Clinic where we offer medical, mental, and dental health to the folks that have state insurance or are uninsured, we basically turn no one away. Xcel is a very big sponsor to that community. Their employees sit on many boards and commissions and non-profits in our city. They're very, very active in our community.

What's it like to work at the plant? I have a little story. I started working out a few years ago at our local WMCA, about 5:30 in the morning, and there's a gentleman there, young kid, and we got to know each other, he's a high school senior, and this was probably January we started working out, and we got to be friends, and I said, "What are you going to do when you graduate?" He said "I don't know, I don't know what I want to do. Maybe go in the service." He was studying to be a certified trainer, "because he used to be picked on when he was a kid in high school. He was a little chubby kid and he got picked on and bullied so he started lifting weights and working out. No one wants to pick on him now. We started talking and I know there was going to be an outage at the plant, and they need a lot more temporary employees for that, for the outage. So I said, "Why don't you think about doing that." We talked over a couple of months, and I said, "You know they're starting to take applications. I know a few people there, if you want me to make a call, or you can use me as a reference, that's fine," so he decided to do that and he got a job there. And it turned into a permanent job, he works there now, it's his second year, he's taking tests now so he can move up in his position. He loves that facility, he loves the company, and he thinks it's going to be a career. Now as someone that just retired, and I had 42 dental labs around the country, trying to find younger folks that want to have a career now, is a little difficult. That's what Xcel does in our community, they have a lot of career

employees there. They're very good to our community, they take care of us very well, very philanthropic, And you talked about, Senator, about the security issue, I was a county Commissioner when 9/11 hit, we had 2 sheriff boats in the water 24 hours a day, thankfully it wasn't very, very cold because they're open boats. We had the National Guard guarding our facility. I've been in the facility several times, you cannot get by anyone just by walking in. You talk about the SWAT time that they have in Canada? They have very, very good training at the facility. They have their own obviously police force, as mandated, as Pam mentioned, by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Our police chief, Chief Sather and our fire chief Chief Warner, worked hand in hand with their police and with their fire. They helped us with some equipment, financially also, and we have regular training with them, because if there's an incident, we need to know what to do, how to react, who's going to be, what's the level, and then twice a year we do a nuclear drill where we'll do a practice, and I think it's coming up in May, and at 8 o'clock in the morning, they tell us what happened, and how do we get out. We bring in everybody to our emergency operations. How do we get our senior citizens, or the folks that are in senior homes, rest homes, nursing homes, where do we take them. Who responds to what, what roads get blocked off, what's the procedure for this particular thing, there may be a chlorine leak, or it may be a leak of any kind of isotopes, things like that, those are all covered. And then FEMA comes in. and does, it's about an 8-10 hour operation and the emergency response is phenomenal. So our training is very, very up to date and it's very comprehensive. As the Mayor of Red Wing, I have no concerns about having the plant in our community.

They talk about long term storage, we're always working on that. We work on the federal level, we have a Native American tribe right next door, to the plant, and we work hand in hand with them with the federal government, that's an issue. But for us now, we have the dry cask storage. We've had zero issues with any of the dry cask storage, zero. I'd put one in my back yard. As they say, I've been asked that, and I've said yes, I would. We are very happy to host the plant at our facility. I will stand for any questions, if anyone has any questions about ha tit's like to host a plant in their community.

Senator Myrdal (sp?): Thank you Senator and the Mayor. Just a quick question, and I appreciate your coming all the way from the dark side over there in Minnesota.

Iocco: Don't tell anybody

Senator Myrdal: As an elected official, you've heard some talk you've talked about the waste, you've talked about the opinion, or the fear, the attitude toward nuclear, that's sort of there, have you had any protesters, any of those issues, and with your constituents, as you are an elected official, like us here, are there concerns about nuclear energy in that, sort of in the policy mode, if you will.

Iocco: Our City is a big supporter of the relicensing. If we lose that plant, not only in the financial impact, but what are we going to do for power? We're in trouble. We have limited power. We do have protesters. I was a township official when the first relicensing in the 90s, and we went up and lobbied our state senators and state representatives to relicense the plant. They'll bring in the protesters will bring in folks from all over the country. They're going to say how bad it is, they're going to have nonfactual information, I was at our Public Utilities Commission, the

PUC, who at the state level helps relicense. And some of the facts and figures from the opposing folks, those are not true facts, those are made up, how many people are dying every day in Red Wing because of the plant there. But for the most part, our city is well behind Xcel Energy and the relicensing for the plant and keeping it open.

Rep. Anderson: Gary, I was googling, you have houses within 700 yards of the nuclear plant and you're only a few miles away, and nobody's questioning that?

Iocco: You always have someone that's saying, well, you know, I got cancer because I live right next door. Well, we have all the plant workers, we have homes everywhere. Basically across the street is the Treasure Island Resort and Casino, and their homes, and the city homes, we don't have an issue with it. What we have an issues, usually there are some people in Red Wing who don't like to have a power company, and what I ask them is that when you go to the light switch and you flip it, don't you want your lights to come on? We have no issue.

Rep. Anderson: Well, thanks, because we deal with that. You can have something 30 miles from somebody here and they think it's a headache.

Iocco: And we're here 700 feet.

Sen. Olson: Gary, just so that I have a picture of the size of the plant, if you can explain like what the gigawatt size is, and what's its footprint as far as service for electricity?

Iocco: We have 2 generating plants, and I think that Pam may be a little more educated than I am on the size of the plant and how many acres.

Pam Gorman Prpchaska, Xcel: The plant sits on about 550 acres. We have 2 generating units, each producing about 550 MW so 1,100 MW total. You can think of it as about a million residential homes.

Iocco: Mr. Chair, thank you, committee members thank you, I know you have a tough job to do for your constituents...