

RECOMMENDATION 3-2022

To: Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development Commission
From: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
Subject: Wheatfield power plant property transition
Date: February 24, 2022

DESCRIPTION: NIPSCO's Shahfer Power Plant in the vicinity of Wheatfield is scheduled to close. NIPSCO's parent company, NiSource, currently is considering future uses of the property. NIPSCO officials calculate their land holdings in the vicinity to be approximately 3000 acres.

Once the power plant is retired, the coal ash ponds will be to be refilled and capped. To meet this requirement, NIPSCO reportedly has two options available to it:

- 1) Dig two new holes, and use the earth to fill in the ponds; or
- 2) Obtain the fill from a broader area on the NIPSCO property.

There is a cost differential between both options, with the first option being less expensive to NiSource shareholders. However, provided it is economically feasible through partnership with DNR, NIPSCO's preference is to convert some of its holdings to solar energy generation and place a sizable portion under Department of Natural Resources management for wildlife and recreation.

NIPSCO also has been mindful of the region's flood mitigation needs, and has remained fully open to the area serving as a manageable floodwater storage area during peak events. The Commission Director has formally communicated this interest to NiSource officials, and the Commission is being considered as a recipient of a grant to fund advance design and hydrological modeling work.

LOCATION: East of IN-49 in Jasper County near the Kankakee River

ISSUES: If the property is converted to DNR management without integrating flood storage needs from the outset, the Commission could miss an opportunity to store substantially floodwater during peak events.

RECOMMENDATION: The Committee recommends that the Commission pursue and accept outside grant funds to support hydrological modeling and redesign of the property for flood storage needs. The Committee further urges that the Commission support the transition of the property provided that flood mitigation goals incorporated into its eventual use. The Committee also recognizes that given the scope of the area, partnership with NIPSCO, DNR, and other funding sources will be necessary to ensure the transition's feasibility.

ADOPTED BY COMMITTEE 2/24/2022

ADOPTED BY COMMISSION 3/31/2022