

# Memo

To: Commissioner Kalk

From: Sara Cardwell, <sup>SC</sup> Public Utility Analyst

Date: April 13, 2016

**Re: Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Inc.  
Electric Generation/Wind – Ward County  
Case No. PU-08-75**

On January 28, 2016, a work session was held to discuss Tree and Shrub mitigation issues. One of the outcomes of the work session was that Staff should make recommendations to the Commissioner with the portfolio regarding next steps for cases where the Company has made multiple efforts but has had less than satisfactory results with their tree and shrub mitigation efforts. The case discussed below provides an example of a case where the Company planted trees and shrubs multiple times but has not been successful in achieving a 75 percent survival rate.

Recommendation: Find that Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. has made good faith efforts to grow replacement trees and shrubs in Case No. PU-08-75 and should not have to continue with further shrub and tree mitigation efforts.

## Background:

This is a 115.5 MW wind energy project built in Ward County, North Dakota called PrairieWinds ND1. On June 4, 2012, the Company filed a Tree/Shrub Replacement Plan stating that 989 trees and 345 shrubs were removed during construction of the project resulting in the need to plant 1978 trees and 690 shrubs for a total of 2,668. The plants would occur in spring, 2012.

On November 30, 2012, the Company reported that 2343 trees and shrubs were planted in 2012. The Company stated that it planned to plant an additional 503 trees and shrubs in 2013. On May 22, 2013 the Company reported that it would be planting 400-500 trees and shrubs at the Boy Scout Camp west of Minot. On September 30, 2013, the Company reported that a total of 581 trees and shrubs had been planted in 2013. On November 6, 2014, the Company reported that the survival rate was 80 percent.

In the Company's October 30, 2015 report, it stated the survival rate was 88 percent.

One interpretation of the survival requirements is that the Company should report for an additional year because they replanted in 2013. However, in consideration that the Company reported a high survival rate in 2015 and planted that majority of the requirement in 2012, the Company should be relieved of further reporting requirements.