

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**ALLETE, Inc.
Bison 2 Wind Project – Oliver / Morton Counties
Siting Application**

Case No. PU-11-57

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

August 10, 2011

Appearances

Commissioners Tony Clark, Kevin Cramer, and Brian P. Kalk.

David R. Moeller, Senior Attorney, Minnesota Power, 30 West Superior Street, Duluth, MN 55802, on behalf of the Applicant.

Mitchell D. Armstrong, Special Assistant Attorney General on behalf of the North Dakota Public Service Commission.

Al Wahl, Administrative Law Judge pursuant to temporary appointment by the Office of Administrative Hearings, 1701 North Ninth Street, Bismarck, North Dakota 58501-1882, as Procedural Hearing Officer.

Preliminary Statement

On February 4, 2011, Minnesota Power, an operating division of ALLETE, Inc. (Minnesota Power) submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) to submit an application for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for a 105 MW wind energy conversion facility in Morton and Oliver counties of North Dakota. Minnesota Power requested in its LOI that the Commission shorten the one-year waiting period required between filing of the LOI and the filing of an application.

On March 10, 2011, the North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission) shortened the one-year waiting period to two months, and assessed a filing fee of \$80,000.00 due upon filing of an application.

On April 6, 2011, Minnesota Power filed an Application for a Certificate of Site Compatibility (Application) authorizing construction of the 105 MW Bison 2 Wind Project (Bison 2) consisting of up to 35 wind turbine generators and associated facilities in Morton and Oliver counties, North Dakota.

On May 18, 2011, the Commission deemed the Application complete conditioned on the filing of final wind turbine locations on or before June 30, 2011, and issued a Notice of Filing and Notice of Hearing, scheduling a public hearing for July 7, 2011, at 10:00 a.m. CDT, at the Oliver County Courthouse, 11 West Main, Center, North Dakota 58530. The Notice identified the following issues to be considered:

1. Will the location, construction and operation of the proposed facilities produce minimal adverse effects on the environment and upon the welfare of the citizens of North Dakota?
2. Are the proposed facilities compatible with the environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources?
3. Will the proposed facility locations minimize adverse human and environmental impacts while ensuring continued system reliability and integrity, and ensuring that energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion?

On June 29, 2011, Minnesota Power submitted a map detailing the proposed final locations for turbines. Minnesota Power also supplemented its Application with additional information on wetland delineation, cultural resources surveys and agency consultation.

On June 30, 2011, Minnesota Power filed an executed Certification Relating to Order Provisions – Wind Energy Conversion Facility Siting.

On July 7, 2011, the public hearing was held as scheduled. Having allowed all interested persons an opportunity to be heard, and having heard, reviewed and considered all testimony and evidence presented, the Commission makes the following:

Findings of Fact

1. Minnesota Power, an operating division of ALLETE, Inc., is a Minnesota corporation and Minnesota public utility as defined under Minn. Stat. §216B.02, subd. 4.
2. ALLETE, Inc. is registered to conduct business in the State of North Dakota, as evidenced by a Certificate of Good Standing issued by the North Dakota Secretary of State on May 13, 2011.
3. Minnesota Power proposes to construct and own a wind energy facility (the Bison 2 Wind Project) to be located in Morton and Oliver counties, North Dakota, approximately 10 miles north and northwest of New Salem, North Dakota. The project area, as amended in late-filed Hearing Exhibit 6, consists of approximately 14,500 acres (22.6 square miles). The wind turbines will be placed throughout the project site.

4. Associated facilities to be constructed within the project area include access roads, underground electrical and feeder lines, additions to an existing electrical substation, meteorological towers, wind monitoring stations, and operations and maintenance buildings.

5. North Dakota Century Code § 49-22-16 provides that no energy conversion facility site shall be designated if it violates any county or city land use, zoning, building rules, regulations or ordinances. Morton and Oliver counties require zoning permits for construction, and Minnesota Power has obtained all necessary permits.

Project Design

6. The project will have a nameplate (gross) generating capacity of 105 MW, consisting of 35 3.0 MW wind turbines and associated facilities. Projected average annual output is estimated at 380,000 MWh per year.

7. Minnesota Power plans to use Siemens 3.0 MW turbines. These are utility-grade wind turbines with a nominal nameplate rating of 3,000 kW. Each turbine will have an 80-meter (262 feet) hub height and a 101 meter (331.4 feet) rotor diameter. Each turbine begins operating at wind speeds of 3.0 meters per second (m/s), or 8.9 miles per hour (mph), and reaches its rated capacity (3.0 MW) at a wind speed of 12 to 13 m/s (26.8 to 29.0 mph).

8. Each turbine is designed to operate at wind speeds of up to 25 m/s (55.9 mph) and can withstand wind speeds of more than 55 m/s (123.0 mph).

9. Each tower will be secured by a concrete foundation that can vary in design depending on the soil conditions. A typical foundation extends seven to ten feet below grade where it spreads to a final diameter of 50 to 70 feet at the base. Turbine lighting will be limited to warning lights required by the Federal Aviation Administration. A control panel inside the base of each turbine tower houses communication and electronic circuitry. Each turbine is equipped with a wind speed and direction sensor that communicates to the turbine control system to signal when sufficient winds are present for operation. The turbine features variable-speed control and independent blade pitch to assure aerodynamic efficiency. Electricity generated by each turbine is brought to a pad-mounted transformer where the voltage is stepped up to a power collection line voltage of 34.5 kV. This electricity is collected by sets of underground power collection lines.

10. The 34.5 kV collector system transmits power to the project collector substation. At the project substation, the power will be transformed to 230 kV and transmitted via an existing overhead 230 kV transmission line, interconnecting with the transmission grid at the existing Square Butte Substation. Electrical energy is converted from AC to DC via a DC converter station within the Square Butte Substation. Electrical energy from the Bison 2 Wind Project will be transmitted to customers via the existing Minnesota Power DC Line which extends from the Square Butte Substation to Minnesota Power's

Arrowhead Substation located near Duluth, Minnesota and on the existing AC system as available.

11. Wind data was collected from four meteorological towers constructed in the project site area. Minnesota Power expects the project will have annual average wind speeds of 8 mps (equivalent to 17.8 mph) or higher, comparable to National Renewable Energy Laboratory wind power class ratings of 5 and 6, indicating an excellent to outstanding wind resource.

12. Construction of the Bison 2 Wind Project is expected to take approximately 15 months, at a total estimated construction cost of \$157 million.

13. Minnesota Power states it has secured all wind options from landowners necessary for the construction and operations of the Bison 2 Wind Project.

14. Minnesota Power anticipates commencing construction in fall 2011, and commercial operation to begin in late 2012.

15. Safety factors will be incorporated into the wind turbines. Each turbine will be equipped with a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisitions (SCADA) communication technology to control and monitor the turbine. In addition, each turbine is equipped with a lightning protection system and is grounded and shielded to protect against lightning.

16. Construction and operation of the Bison 2 Wind Project will conform to requirements of the National Electric Safety Code.

Siting Criteria

17. North Dakota Administrative Code Chapter 69-06-08 sets forth certain criteria to guide the Commission in evaluating the suitability of granting an application for the certificate of site compatibility. The criteria set forth in North Dakota Administrative Code Section 69-06-08-01 are classified as Exclusion Areas, Avoidance Areas, Selection Criteria, and Policy Criteria. With the exception of prime and unique farm land, an energy conversion facility must not be sited within an Exclusion Area. The exception for prime and unique farm land is if the Commission finds that the prime farm and unique farm land that will be removed from use for the life of the facility is of such small acreage as to be of negligible impact on agricultural production, then such exclusion shall not apply. An energy conversion facility must not be sited within an Avoidance Area unless the applicant shows that under the circumstances there is no reasonable alternative. In determining whether an Avoidance Area should be designated for a facility, the Commission may consider, among other things, the proposed management of adverse impacts; the orderly siting of facilities; system reliability and integrity; the efficient use of resources, and alternate sites. In accordance with the Commission's Selection Criteria, an energy conversion facility shall be approved only if it is demonstrated that no significant adverse impacts will result from the location, construction, and operation of the facility. In accordance with the

Commission's Policy Criteria, preference may be given to an applicant demonstrating certain benefits of the energy conversion facility.

18. Exhibit 8 of the Application labeled Prime Farmland Soil Distribution Map shows that approximately 3.3 percent of the site is prime farmland soils, most of it located in the southeast and northeast portions of the site. The final layout will site only a limited number of turbines and facilities in prime farmlands. Even if all the turbines and access roads were placed within prime farmland areas, only approximately 54 acres of prime farmland would be impacted, or approximately 0.1 percent of prime farmland in the Project site. Unique and prime farmland to be disturbed by this energy conversion facility is of such small acreage as to be of negligible impact on agricultural production.

19. Approximately 54 acres of agricultural production will be impacted due to turbine placement, access roads, the operations and maintenance facility and project substation. Wind turbine configuration will not result in significant impacts to agricultural production. No impacts on the agricultural quality of the crop land are anticipated. If compaction of soils occurs during construction, Minnesota Power will work with landowners to alleviate the compaction.

20. Minnesota Power submitted evidence to demonstrate that the proposed energy conversion facility would not have significant impact on the Selection Criteria set forth in North Dakota Administrative Code section 69-06-08-01(3).

21. Minnesota Power submitted evidence to demonstrate its commitment to maximize the benefits of the proposed energy conversion facility as far as is possible so as to meet the Policy Criteria set forth in North Dakota Administrative Code Section 69-06-08-01(4).

22. No significant adverse impact is foreseen on the ability of the affected area to provide community services, such as housing, health care, schools, police and fire protection, water and sewer, solid waste management, transportation, or public safety. The proposed project is expected to be of economic benefit to the affected area.

23. The only Avoidance Areas identified within the project area are wetlands. Minnesota Power testified that there will be a negligible impact to wetland resources.

24. According to North Dakota Geological Survey data provided by the applicant, two small underground lignite coal reserves have been identified within the project area, but no viable economic reserves have been identified within the project area.

Cultural Resources

25. The Bison 2 Wind Project will avoid all known archaeological sites.

26. On June 28, 2011 the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office issued a letter concurring with the conclusion of the Class III Cultural Resource Inventory for the

Bison 2 Wind Project by Beaver Creek Archaeology of Mandan, North Dakota, regarding the “No Significant Sites Affected” and “No Historic Properties Affected” determinations.

Wetlands and Wildlife

27. Minnesota Power has consulted with numerous local, state, and federal agencies, which are identified in Appendix C of the Application, and Appendix A of the June 29, 2011 Supplement. Two agencies providing significant input were the North Dakota Game and Fish Department and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Neither agency has objected to construction of the project.

28. The North Dakota Game and Fish Department indicated its primary concern is with disturbance of native prairie and wetlands. Minnesota Power met with North Dakota Game and Fish Department to discuss the project area and plans to mitigate any impacts. The disturbance of native prairie and wetlands will be minimal.

29. Concerns of the USFWS focused on migratory birds, wetlands, native grasslands, and threatened and endangered species. Minnesota Power will implement measures to avoid and minimize effects to wildlife at the proposed site by locating facilities away from habitat and wetlands when possible.

30. At the request of USFWS, Minnesota Power is developing an Avian and Bat Protection Plan (ABPP) that will be implemented during construction and for post-construction monitoring. The ABPP will include protocols for field technicians to report and document avian mortalities during routine maintenance operations.

31. The whooping crane is a federally endangered species that may use the project area during spring and fall migration. The project occurs outside of the central migration corridor flyway where 50 percent of confirmed whooping crane sightings in North Dakota have occurred, but within an 80 mile corridor where 75 percent of sightings have occurred. Impacts thought to occur primarily from the loss of stopover habitat will be minimal as only 54 acres (0.1% of the project area) will be permanently disturbed. Minnesota Power is working with the USFWS to develop a programmatic habitat conservation plan and other contributions towards whooping crane conservation efforts.

32. A wetland delineation was conducted for the Bison 2 Wind Project and the results were submitted to the Commission. Wetlands will be avoided to the extent practicable during the construction phase of the project. If impacts to Clean Water Act jurisdictional waters are unavoidable and less than one-half acre, Minnesota Power will seek project authorization under a Section 404 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permit (NWP) application. Any permanent impacts to jurisdictional waters will be mitigated according to USACE requirements.

Further Mitigative Measures

33. Morton County has established setbacks for wind turbine towers from property boundaries, road right-of-ways (ROW), and occupied residences. Minnesota Power's proposed turbine locations meet or exceed those setback requirements. Oliver County has not established setback requirements for wind turbines.

34. Minnesota Power proposed setbacks of at least 471 feet (1.1 x turbine height) from existing transmission lines, publically improved and maintained road right-of-ways, railroads and non-participant property boundaries.

35. No turbines will be placed within 1,400 feet of an occupied residence. The closest turbine to a participating residence is approximately 1,425 feet. The closest turbine to a non-participating residence is approximately 2,900 feet.

36. Minnesota Power conducted noise and shadow flicker analyses, using both "worst case" and "realistic" scenarios. These studies indicated that the Project will not cause adverse effects due to either noise or shadow flicker. As shown in Late Filed Hearing Exhibit 8, the highest expected cumulative noise level at any residence is less than 45 decibels (dB). As shown in Late Filed Hearing Exhibit 9, shadow flicker models show that the participating residence with the greatest potential cumulative exposure will experience about 27 hours annually. Those same models predict that the highest level of exposure at a non-participating residence would be about 12 hours annually.

37. Minnesota Power will maintain ground water protection and soil conservation practices to protect topsoil and adjacent resources, and to minimize soil erosion during construction and operation of the project. Best management practices (BMPs) for erosion and sediment control will be used to minimize wind and water erosion in the project area during and after construction. Only land needed for the facility will be impacted. Temporarily disturbed areas will be restored.

38. Minnesota Power has a legal obligation to decommission the wind energy facilities.

39. Minnesota Power made other representations and agreements as contained in the Certification Relating to Order Provisions – Wind Energy Conversion Facility Siting executed by Minnesota Power on July 8, 2011 and filed with the Commission on July 12, 2011 (Late-filed Hearing Exhibit 7), which is incorporated in these Findings of Fact. The Commission accepts Minnesota Power's proposed modification to Paragraph 16 that it shall bury all underground collection and feeder lines to a depth of at least 42 inches to the top of the lines due to Minnesota Power's representation at the July 7, 2011 hearing about increased costs and that safety will not be compromised. The Commission accepts the following modifications proposed to the Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications attached to the certification:

- a. Paragraph 2: In windbreaks, shelterbelts and other planted areas trees that are one inch diameter or greater at breast height or shrubs anticipated to be cleared must be inventoried for replacement.

- b. Paragraph 3: In native growth areas trees anticipated to be cleared that are 3 inch diameter at breast height or greater must be inventoried for replacement.

From the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Commission now makes its:

Conclusions of Law

1. The Commission has jurisdiction over this proceeding under North Dakota Century Code Chapter 49-22.
2. The energy conversion facility proposed by Minnesota Power is an energy conversion facility site as defined in North Dakota Century Code section 49-22-03(11).
3. The Application submitted by Minnesota Power meets the site evaluation criteria required by North Dakota Century Code chapter 49-22.
4. The location, construction, and operation of the proposed energy conversion facility will produce only minimal adverse effects on the environment and upon the welfare of the citizens of North Dakota.
5. The proposed energy conversion facility is compatible with environmental preservation and the efficient use of resources.
6. The proposed energy conversion facility will minimize adverse human and environmental impact while ensuring continuing system reliability and integrity and ensuring that energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion.
7. The Commission has jurisdiction to ensure compliance with National Electric Safety Code standards in the construction and operation of the proposed energy conversion facility.
8. The proposed project is of such design, location and purpose that it will produce minimal adverse effects

From the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Commission now make its:

Order

The Commission orders:

1. Certificate of Site Compatibility for an Energy Conversion Facility No. 24 is issued to Minnesota Power for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a wind energy facility known as Bison 2 Wind Project in accordance with this Order.
2. The site, as proposed in the Application and amended in late-filed Hearing Exhibit 6, is located in Morton and Oliver counties approximately 10 miles north and

northwest of New Salem, North Dakota, and is designated as the site for construction of the energy conversion facility.

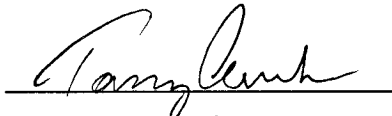
3. Minnesota Power is authorized to construct up to 35 wind turbines totaling approximately 105 MW of total generating capacity in proposed and alternate locations, along with electric collection and communication lines, a project substation, operations and maintenance buildings, meteorological towers, access roads and other associated facilities identified in the application and at the July 7, 2011 public hearing.

4. The July 8, 2011, Certification Relating to Order Provisions – Wind Energy Conversion Facility Siting (Late-filed Exhibit 7), except as modified in accordance with Findings of Fact paragraph 39 above, is incorporated by reference and attached to this Order.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



**Kevin Cramer
Commissioner**



**Tony Clark
Chairman**



**Brian P. Kalk
Commissioner**

Case No. PU-11-57

Minnesota Power

Late-filed Exhibit 7

Standard Certification Relating to Order
Provisions – Energy Conversion Siting

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Allete, Inc.
Bison 2 Wind Project – Oliver/Morton Counties
Siting Application

Case No. PU-11-57

**CERTIFICATION RELATING TO ORDER PROVISIONS - ENERGY CONVERSION
FACILITY SITING**

I am Bradley W. Oachs, a representative of Allete, Inc. ("Allete") with authority to bind Allete to requirements to be set forth by the Commission in its Order and I certify the following:

1. Allete understands and agrees that the Certificate of Site Compatibility will be issued by the Commission subject to the conditions and criteria set forth in Chapter 49-22 of the North Dakota Century Code and Chapter 69-06-08 of the North Dakota Administrative Code, and that Allete shall be responsible for compliance with this order and conditions and criteria set forth in the applicable laws and rules.
2. Allete agrees to hold a preconstruction conference prior to commencement of any construction, which must include an Allete representative, its construction supervisor, and a representative of Commission Staff, to ensure that Allete fully understands the conditions set forth in the Commission's order.
3. Allete agrees to comply with the rules and regulations of all other agencies having jurisdiction over any phase of the proposed energy conversion facility including all city, township, and county zoning regulations.
4. Allete understands and agrees that it shall obtain all other necessary licenses and permits, and shall provide copies of all licenses and permits to the Commission prior to construction activity associated with the energy conversion facility that requires said license or permit.
5. Allete agrees to inform the Commission of its intent to start construction on the energy conversion facility prior to the commencement of construction. Once construction has started, Allete shall keep the Commission updated of construction activities on a weekly basis.
6. Allete understands and agrees that the Certificate of Site Compatibility is subject to suspension or revocation and may, in an appropriate and proper case, be suspended or revoked for failure to comply with the Commission's order, the conditions and criteria of the certificate or subsequent modification, or failure to

comply with the applicable statutes, rules, regulations, standards, and permits of other state or federal agencies.

7. Allete agrees to maintain records that will demonstrate that it has complied with the requirements of the Commission's order and the Certificate of Site Compatibility, and that it will preserve these records for Commission inspection at any reasonable time upon reasonable notice.
8. Allete agrees to construct and operate the energy conversion facility in the manner described in Allete application, in any late filed exhibits and supplemental materials, and in accordance with all applicable safety requirements.
9. Allete agrees to report promptly to the Commission the presence in the permit area of any critical habitat of threatened species, endangered species, bald eagles, or golden eagles that Allete becomes aware of and which were not previously reported to the Commission.
10. Allete understands and agrees that all cultural resource mitigation plans must be submitted to the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office and approved prior to the start of any fieldwork and construction activity in the affected area.
11. Allete understands and agrees that if any cultural resource, paleontological site, archeological site, historical site, or grave site is discovered during construction, it must be marked, preserved and protected from further disturbances until a professional examination can be made by the State Historical Society, a report of such examination is filed with the Commission, and clearance to proceed is given by the Commission.
12. Allete understands and agrees that all buried facility crossings of graded roads shall be bored unless the responsible governing agency specifically permits Allete to open cut the road.
13. Allete understands and agrees that all pre-existing township and county roads and lanes used during construction must be repaired or restored to a condition that is equal to or better than the condition prior to the construction of the energy conversion facility and that will accommodate their previous use, and that areas used as temporary roads or working areas during construction must be restored to their original condition.
14. Allete understands and agrees that construction must be suspended when weather conditions are such that construction activities will cause irreparable damage to roads or land, unless adequate protection measures approved by the Commission are taken.

15. During construction, at least 12 inches of topsoil, where available (or topsoil to the depth of cultivation, whichever is greater), over and along areas where facilities will be placed must be stripped and segregated from subsoil. Any area on which excavated subsoil will be placed must first be stripped of topsoil. After backfilling with subsoil is completed, any excess subsoil must be placed over the excavation area, blending the grade into existing topography. Topsoil must not be placed within the footprint of the facilities, and must be placed over areas containing topsoil.

Allete understands and agrees that where available, at least 12 inches of topsoil over and along trench areas, roadways, tower locations, and locations of associated facilities shall be stripped and shall be segregated from the subsoil and be replaced only after the subsoil is replaced.

16. Allete understands and agrees that it shall bury all underground collection and feeder lines to a depth of at least 48 inches to the top of the lines.
17. Allete understands and agrees that reclamation, fertilization, and reseeding is to be done according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service recommendations, unless otherwise specified by the landowner and approved by the Commission.
18. Allete understands and agrees that its obligation for reclamation and maintenance of energy conversion facility tower locations, associated facilities, roadways and rights-of-way will continue throughout the life of the energy conversion facility.
19. Allete is aware that North Dakota law requires that all companies that own or operate electric generation of any size for the primary purpose of resale must comply with the standards of the National Electrical Safety Code in effect at the time of construction of the generation facility, and agrees to comply with that requirement.
20. Allete agrees to comply with the Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications, attached.
21. Allete understands and agrees that it shall repair or replace all fences and gates removed or damaged during all phases of construction and operation of the proposed energy conversion facility.
22. Allete understands and agrees that it shall repair or replace all broken or damaged drainage tile during all phases of construction and operation of the proposed energy conversion facility.
23. Allete understands and agrees that it shall work with landowners and residents to mitigate any increase in television and residential radio interference that results from the construction of the energy conversion facility.

24. Allele understands and agrees that staging areas or equipment shall not be located on land owned by a person other than Allele _ unless otherwise negotiated with landowners.
25. Allele understands and agrees that it shall remove all waste that is a product of construction and operation, restoration, and maintenance of the site, and properly dispose of it on a regular basis.
26. Allele agrees that it shall, as soon as practicable upon the completion of the construction of each wind turbine, restore the area affected by the activities to as near as is practicable to the condition as it existed prior to the beginning of construction.
27. Allele agrees that it shall provide, if requested, educational material for landowners within the site boundaries about the proposed energy conversion facility and any restriction or danger concerning the proposed energy conversion facility.
28. Allele understands and agrees that it shall provide any necessary safety measures for traffic control or to restrict public access to the energy conversion facility.
29. Allele understands and agrees that it shall advise the Commission of any extraordinary events which take place at the site of the energy conversion facility, including injuries to any person, the death of any threatened or endangered species, a tower collapse, or a catastrophic turbine failure, within five business days of such event.
30. Allele understands and agrees that it shall advise the Commission of the discovery of a large number of dead birds or bats on the site within five business days of such event.
31. Allele understands and agrees that it shall implement a procedure for how complaints concerning the proposed energy conversion facility will be handled by Allele .
32. Allele agrees to provide the Commission with engineering design drawings showing surveyed structure and collection substation locations prior to construction.
33. Allele understands and agrees that it shall inform the Commission in writing of any plans to modify the energy conversion facility, or of any plans to modify the site plan for the energy conversion facility. Allele understands and agrees to obtain written approval from the Commission prior to any modifications to the site plan or the energy conversion facility, associated facilities, and roadway locations. Approval may be granted after notice and opportunity for hearing.

34. Allete agrees to provide the Commission with both an electronic and a paper copy of the design specifications for the construction of the energy conversion facility showing the location of the energy conversion facility as built, and will provide this information within three months of the completion of the construction. Allete also agrees to provide an electronic version of the as-built facility design specifications that can be imported into ESRI GIS mapping software within 3 months of the completion of the construction. This electronic map data must be referenced to the North Dakota coordinate system of 1983, North and/or South zones US Survey feet (NAD 83) UTM Zone 13N or 14N feet (NAD 83), or geographic coordinate system (WGS 84) feet. The vertical data must be in the appropriate vertical datum for the coordinate system used. All submissions must specify the datum in which the data was developed.
35. Allete is aware that under North Dakota Century Code section 49-02-27 the Commission has rules for decommissioning of wind energy conversion facilities. Allete agrees to comply with all decommissioning rules adopted by the Commission.
36. Allete understands and agrees that the authorizations granted by the Certificate of Site Compatibility for the energy conversion facility are subject to modification by order of the Commission if deemed necessary to protect further the public or the environment.
37. Allete understands and agrees that in the event Allete desires to construct, within any site granted by a Certificate of Site Compatibility in this proceeding, an energy conversion facility that was not requested in Allete 's application in this proceeding, Allete shall apply for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for the facility.
38. Allete shall notify the Commission, as soon as reasonably possible, if any damage, as defined by North Dakota Century Code Chapter 49-23, occurs to underground facilities during construction conducted under the certificate or permit issued in this proceeding. In the event of any damage to underground facilities, Allete shall suspend construction in the vicinity of the damage until compliance with One-Call Excavation Notice System requirements under North Dakota Century Code Chapter 49-23 has been determined and clearance to proceed has been given by the Commission or Commission staff.
39. The certificate of site compatibility is subject to suspension or revocation and may, after hearing, be suspended or revoked for failure to comply with the Commission's order, requirements of the One-Call Excavation Notice System under North Dakota Century Code Chapter 49-23, the conditions and criteria of the certificate or permit or subsequent modification, or failure to comply with applicable statutes, or rules, regulations, standards, and permits of other state or federal agencies.

Dated this 8th day of July, 2011.

Allete, Inc.

By Bradley W. Oachs
Its Chief Operating Officer

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Allete, Inc.
Bison 2 Wind Project – Oliver/Morton Counties
Siting Application

Case No. PU-11-57

Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications

Inventory

1. Trees and shrubs anticipated to be cleared, including those that are considered invasive species or noxious weeds (*e.g., Caragana arborescens, Elaeagnus angustifolia, Rhamnus cathartica, Tamarix chinensis, T. parviflora, T. ramosissima, Ulmus pumila*), must be inventoried before cutting. The inventory must record the location, number, and species of trees and shrubs.
2. In windbreaks, shelterbelts and other planted areas, trees or shrubs anticipated to be cleared, regardless of size, must be inventoried for replacement.
3. In native growth areas, trees anticipated to be cleared that are 1 inch diameter at breast height (dbh) or greater must be inventoried for replacement.
4. In native growth areas, shrubs anticipated to be cleared in the permanent right-of-way must be inventoried for replacement.
5. In native growth areas outside the permanent right-of-way, shrubs must be cut flush with the surface of the ground, taking care to leave the naturally occurring seed bank and root stock intact. If soil disturbance is necessary, the native topsoil must be preserved and replaced after construction. Shrubs must be allowed to regenerate naturally where native topsoil is preserved and replaced. Where native topsoil is not preserved and replaced, shrubs anticipated to be cleared must be inventoried for replacement.
6. In native growth areas, trees and shrubs may be inventoried by actual count or by a sampling method that will properly represent the woody vegetation population. A sampling plan developed by the company, filed with the North Dakota Public Service Commission (Commission) and approved prior to the start of construction must define the sampling method to be used for trees, for tall shrubs and for low shrubs. The data from the sample plots must be extrapolated to the total acreage of the wooded area to be cleared to determine the species and quantity of trees and shrubs to be replaced.

Clearing for Construction

7. Trees and shrubs must be selectively cleared, leaving mature trees and shrubs intact where practical.
8. The maximum width of clear cuts through windbreaks, shelterbelts and all other wooded areas is 50 feet, unless otherwise approved by the Commission.
9. If the area of trees or shrubs actually cleared differs from the area inventoried, the difference in number of trees and shrubs to be replaced must be noted on the inventory.

Replacement

10. Prior to tree and shrub replacement, documentation identifying the number and variety of trees and shrubs removed, as well as the mitigation plan for the proposed number, variety, type, location and date of replacement plantings, must be filed with the Commission for approval.
11. Two 2-year-old saplings must be planted for every one tree removed. Two shrubs (stem cuttings) must be planted for every one shrub removed.
12. Except in the case of invasive or noxious species, trees and shrubs must be replaced by the same species or similar species, suitable for North Dakota growing conditions as recommended by the North Dakota Forest Service. Invasive or noxious species must be replaced by similar non-invasive or non-noxious species suitable for North Dakota growing conditions as recommended by the North Dakota Forest Service.
13. Landowners must be given the option of having replacement trees and shrubs planted on the landowner's property, either on or off the right-of-way. The landowner must also be given the opportunity to waive those options in writing in order to have replacement trees and shrubs planted off the landowner's property.
14. At the conclusion of the project, documentation identifying the actual number, variety, type, location and date of the replacement plantings must be filed with the Commission.
15. Tree and shrub replacements must be inspected annually, in September, for three years. The first annual inspection must be at least one year from the anniversary date of the original plantings. A report of each annual inspection must be submitted to the Commission by October 1 of each year, documenting the condition of plantings and any woodlands work completed as of September of each year. If after the third annual report the survival rate is less than 75%, the Commission may order additional planting(s).

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

Certificate of Site Compatibility for Energy Conversion Facility

Certificate Number 24

This is to certify that the Commission has designated an energy conversion facility site for Minnesota Power's, an operating division of Allete, Inc., Bison 2 Wind Project consisting of up to 35 3.0 MW wind turbine generators and associated facilities in Morton and Oliver Counties of North Dakota

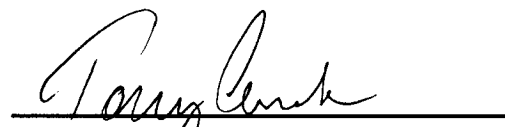
The facility may be sited in this designated location in compliance with the energy conversion facility siting criteria. This certificate is issued in accordance with the Finding of Fact, Conclusion of Law and Order of the Commission in Case No. PU-11-57 dated August 10, 2011 and is subject to the conditions and limitations noted in that order.

Bismarck, North Dakota, August 10, 2011.

ATTEST:

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION


Executive Secretary


Commissioner