

ORIGINAL



minnesota power

AN ALLETE COMPANY

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August 7, 2014
VIA E-MAIL and OVERNIGHT DELIVERY

Mr. Darrel Nitschke
Executive Secretary
North Dakota Public Service Commission
600 E. Boulevard Avenue, Department 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

RE: **Minnesota Power's Bison 3 Wind Project**
Case No. PU-11-162

Dear Mr. Nitschke:

In the spring of 2013, Minnesota Power communicated with the North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC), the presence of a bald eagle's nest located within the project boundary of its Bison 3 Wind Facility (facility). The nest was identified after the Bison 3 facility was placed in-service and was discussed during the PSC Bison 4 public hearing held on August 21, 2013.

In 2013, Minnesota Power contracted Western Ecosystems Technology, Inc. ("WEST") to monitor the eagle's nest. As a result of that monitoring, WEST prepared a report reviewing the nest's bald eagle use and their associated flight patterns. Minnesota Power filed the report under the above mentioned Bison 3 docket on January 7, 2014.

In 2014 Minnesota Power has again contracted with WEST to monitor the nest to determine its use and the number of chicks successfully fledged. The resulting report from that monitoring is attached along with ten paper copies and is filed under the PSC Bison 3 Docket.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at the number above should you have any questions.

Best Regards

Daniel P. McCourtney

DPM:sr

cc: David Moeller, Minnesota Power

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Report regarding eagle nest monitoring

Allete, Inc.

Daniel McCourtney



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August 4, 2014

Dan McCourtney
Minnesota Power
30 West Superior St
Duluth, MN 55802

RE: 2014 Bison Wind Farm Eagle Nest Monitoring

Dear Mr. McCourtney,

WEST completed an eagle nest survey at the proposed Bison Wind IV facility in April 2013 and located one active bald eagle nest (i.e., bird was on the nest) within approximately 0.25 mile of the south-central boundary of Bison IV and approximately 0.5 mile for a turbine on Bison III. Past nest surveys in this area for Bison III did not locate a bald eagle nest in this or other location near the project. WEST initiated surveys of this nest in 2013 upon locating the nest through mid-August to document how the adults and fledged birds were utilizing the vicinity. These data were reported to in fall 2013 to Minnesota Power.

In May 2014, Minnesota Power requested that WEST conduct a site visit to the same nest to confirm activity. This visit was conducted during the morning of May 19, 2014. The biologist confirmed that the nest was active and the adult was observed tending at least two chicks. WEST returned to the nest location on July 31, 2014 to determine if fledged birds were using the area. WEST confirmed that there were at least two fledglings. One fledging was observed perched in a tree near the nest. The other was observed flying and soaring throughout the area. In addition, WEST observed one adult briefly before it flew out of sight.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Clayton Derby
Senior Manager