

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**Sunflower Wind Project, LLC
Wind Energy Conversion Facility – Stark & Morton
Siting Application**

Case No. PU-14-105

FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER

June 25, 2014

Appearances

Commissioners Brian P. Kalk, Randy Christmann and Julie Fedorchak.

Brian R. Bjella, Attorney at Law, Crowley Fleck, PLLP, 100 West Broadway, Suite 250, Bismarck, North Dakota 58501, on behalf of the Applicant, Sunflower Wind Project, LLC.

Ryan Norrell, Attorney at Law, Dwyer Law Office, PLLC, 1605 East Capitol Avenue, Bismarck, North Dakota 58502, Special Assistant Attorney General on behalf of the North Dakota Public Service Commission.

Wade C. Mann, Administrative Law Judge, Office of Administrative Hearings, 2911 North 14th Street, Suite 303, Bismarck, North Dakota 58503.

Preliminary Statement

On March 3, 2014, Sunflower Wind Project, LLC (Sunflower) filed an Application for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for a wind energy conversion project located in Morton and Stark Counties, North Dakota.

On April 9, 2014, the Commission deemed the Application complete and issued a Notice of Filing and Notice of Hearing, scheduling a public hearing for May 12, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. CDT at the Hebron Community Center, 620 Washington Avenue, Hebron, North Dakota 58638. The Notice identified the following issues to be considered:

1. Will the location, construction, and operation of the proposed facilities produce minimal adverse effects upon 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 continuing system reliability and

integrity and ensuring that energy needs are met and fulfilled in an orderly and timely fashion?

On May 1, 2014, Sunflower filed with the Commission its revised Table 4, estimated project ground disturbing impacts, as found on page 5 of the Application.

On May 1, 2014, the North Dakota Department of Health filed comments with respect to the project with the Commission.

The public hearing was held as scheduled on May 12, 2014. On May 19, 2014, Sunflower filed late-filed Exhibits. 2 thru 6. 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. Sunflower Wind Project, LLC is a Delaware limited liability company headquartered in Santa Barbara, California, and is registered to do business in the State of North Dakota.
2. Sunflower proposes to construct a wind energy facility known as the Sunflower Wind Energy Project (Project) in Stark and Morton Counties south of Hebron, west of Glen Ullin and east of Richardton. The Project area consists of approximately 12,700 acres.
3. Associated facilities to be constructed within the Project area include access roads, electrical collection systems and cabling, an operation and maintenance building, an electrical substation, and an interconnection yard.
4. The Project will consist of up to 59 wind turbine generators, which will be placed throughout the Project area.
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. Both Morton County and Stark County have issued conditional use permits for the Project.

Project Design

6. The Project will have a name plate generating capacity up to 110 megawatts. The Project will consist of either up to 55 Vestas V-110 turbines or up to 59 General Electric 1.85-87 turbines, along with associated facilities. The projected average annual output is estimated between 450,000 to 525,000 megawatt hours, depending upon which turbine model is selected. The Vestas turbines have a tower height of 262 feet, a rotor diameter of 361 feet, with a total

height of 443 feet. The General Electric turbines have a tower height of 262 feet, a rotor diameter of 285 feet, with a total height of 405 feet. The Vestas turbines begin operation at 6.7 mph up to a maximum of 44 miles per hour. The General Electric turbines begin operation at 6.7 miles per hour up to a maximum of 56 miles per hour.

7. Each turbine is secured by a concrete foundation that can vary in design depending upon soil conditions. Turbine lighting will be installed as 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 with the turbines control system to signal when sufficient winds are present for operation. 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.

8. The underground collection line feeder system will deliver electricity to the Project substation. At the substation, the voltage will be stepped up to 230 KV for transmission.

9. At the substation, the Project will interconnect to the U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration's Dickinson-Mandan 230 KV transmission line. The transmission line is located within the Project area.

10. The site for this wind energy Project was selected as optimal based upon three meteorological towers installed in 2009 to determine the wind characteristics within the Project area.

11. Construction of the Project is expected to take approximately six to nine months, at a total estimated cost of \$180 million.

12. Sunflower anticipates that construction will start in the spring of 2015.

13. All easements needed for the Project have been obtained.

14. Sunflower has entered into a Power Purchase Agreement with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, dated November 6, 2013.

15. An Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contractor will be retained for construction of the Project. The EPC contractor will use the services of local contractors, where possible, to assist in Project construction.

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

17. Construction and operation of the Sunflower Wind Energy Project will conform to the requirements of the National Electric Safety Code.

Siting Criteria

18. 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 § 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 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.

19. With the exception of prime farm land, no exclusion areas have been identified within the Project area. The Project area will contain only approximately 1% of prime farmland. To the extent practicable, prime farmland has been avoided. The Commission finds that the prime farmland which may be disturbed by this energy conversion facility is of such small acreage as to be of negligible impact on agricultural production.

20. Approximately 55 acres of agricultural production will be impacted due to turbine placement, associated access roads, project substation, operation and maintenance building and the interconnection site. Wind turbine configuration will not result in significant impacts to agricultural production. No impacts on the agricultural quality of the croplands are anticipated. If compaction of soils occurs during construction, then Sunflower will work with landowners to alleviate compaction.

21. No economically recoverable coal reserves have been identified in the Project area.

22. With respect to grasslands and native prairie, approximately 24 acres of grasslands will be permanently impacted, and an additional 81 acres will be temporarily impacted.

23. Sunflower submitted evidence to demonstrate that the proposed energy conversion facility will not have a significant impact on the Selection Criteria set forth in North Dakota Administrative Code § 69-06-08-01(5).

24. Sunflower submitted evidence to demonstrate its commitment to maximize the benefits of the proposed energy conversion facility so far as possible so as to meet the Policy Criteria set forth in North Dakota Administrative Code § 69-06-08-01(6).

25. No significant adverse impact is foreseen on the ability of the affected areas 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.

Cultural Resources

26. The results of the Class III pedestrian survey conducted in September 2013 were that four unrecorded cultural resources and one previously recorded site were identified. The survey indicated one Native American cultural material scatter, two Native American isolated finds, and two historic/architectural sites.

27. No sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places were found. Sunflower will conduct additional Class III pedestrian field surveys this spring, and should any eligible sites be located, they will be avoided during construction. Sunflower will provide its survey results to the North Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Sunflower will obtain a concurrence letter from the SHPO and file a copy with the Commission indicating that no significant sites and that no historic properties are affected.

28. The Project has a federal nexus due to the interconnection with the Western Area Power Administration's transmission line. As a result, consultation has been implemented pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

29. No significant impacts to cultural resources are anticipated.

Wetlands and Wildlife

30. Sunflower has consulted with numerous local, state and federal agencies, which are identified in the Application. These agencies include the United States

Fish and Wildlife Service and North Dakota Game and Fish Department. No agencies have objected to construction of the Project.

31. Sunflower has indicated it is committed to making any design changes needed to avoid any permanent impacts to wetlands. No impacts to jurisdictional wetlands are anticipated.

32. Sunflower completed a fixed point avian survey and raptor nest survey in 2013. No federally endangered, threatened or candidate species were recorded. No eagle nests were recorded within the study area or in the buffer zone to the study area.

33. Sunflower completed a study of bat activity in the Project area in the summer and fall of 2013. This included acoustic monitoring detectors. Compared with other wind projects in the surrounding region, the results of Sunflower's study recorded some of the lowest acoustic detections of bats. No species that potentially exist in the area are federally listed as threatened or endangered.

34. The Sprague's Pipit may be present in the Project area during spring and fall migration. Impacts are expected to be minimal as the species was not detected during avian surveys.

35. No whooping cranes were observed during spring and summer avian surveys. The Project area has very limited wetlands and is at low risk for whooping crane migration. In the event a whooping crane is spotted within one mile of the Project area, Sunflower is committed to temporarily shutting down the turbines until the whooping crane leaves the area.

36. Based upon the studies conducted and mitigation measures in place, no significant impacts to avian species are expected.

Noise and Shadow Flicker Studies

37. Sunflower conducted a screening level acoustic assessment to determine the feasibility of the Project to operate within acceptable noise criteria. Noise was modeled at a distance of 100 feet from each residential structure in accordance with North Dakota Administrative Code § 69-06-08-01(4), which states that sound levels within 100 feet of inhabited residences or community buildings must not exceed 50 dBA. Twelve residences were identified within one mile of the project area. Of those twelve, seven are occupied, one is unoccupied and three are undetermined. Sound levels within 100 feet of any of these twelve identified sites are not expected to exceed the 50 dBA threshold.

38. Sunflower completed a shadow flicker study for both of the two wind turbine models being considered for the Project. The analysis included both

primary and alternate turbine locations. The maximum worst-case shadow flicker duration at any occupied residence receptor is 36 hours, 24 minutes per year. This location is owned by a participating land owner and the structure is not occupied full time. Based upon the analysis, shadow flicker impacts in the Project area are expected to be within generally acceptable ranges.

Further Mitigative Measures

39. Sunflower will comply with all setbacks established by Stark and Morton Counties, as well as those required under North Dakota Administrative Code section 69-06-08-01..

40. The Stark County setbacks are 2,000 feet from occupied dwellings, commercial buildings, public use structures or facilities; 200 feet from centerline of public roads and above ground communication and electrical lines; 2.5 times the rotor diameter or greater from the perimeter of the facilities; and a minimum of 125 feet from the center of county roads or from section lines for the project building.

41. The Morton County setbacks are 1.25 times the total height or 1,320 feet, whichever is greater from occupied residences, commercial buildings, or publicly used structures or facilities, or state or county parks; 250 feet or greater from the centerline of a roadway and above ground communication and electrical lines; 1 to 1.5 times the rotor diameter or greater for the perimeter of the facility; and a minimum of 60 feet from the center right of way of county roads and state or federal highways for project-related buildings.

42. Setbacks from roads required in both counties under N.D. Administrative Code section 69-06-08-01 are one and one-tenth times the height of the turbine from interstate or state roadway right-of-way; and one and one-tenth times the height of the turbine plus seventy-five feet from the centerline of any county or maintained township roadway.

43. Sunflower will maintain groundwater protection and soil conservation practices to protect topsoil and adjacent resources, and to eliminate 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 and reseeded.

44. Sunflower completed a microwave beam path study. The study identified fifteen specific microwave pathways across the Project area, and the worst case Fresnel Zones for each beam path were calculated. These areas are avoided during micro siting of the Project.

45. Sunflower will participate in the North Dakota one-call excavation notice system.

46. Sunflower has a legal obligation to decommission the wind energy facilities. North Dakota Administrative Code chapter 69-09-09 requires a decommissioning plan be filed prior to operation and provides that the Commission may require financial assurance after the tenth year of operation to cover the anticipated costs of decommissioning.

47. Sunflower will coordinate with local authorities and first responders regarding emergency response measures.

48. Sunflower made certain representations and covenants as contained in the Certification Relating to Order Provisions-Wind Energy Conversion Facility Siting executed by Sunflower and filed with the Commission on May 19, 2014, which are incorporated into these Findings of Fact.

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 Sunflower is an energy conversion facility as defined in North Dakota Century Code § 49-22-03(5).

3. The application submitted by Sunflower 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 energy conversion facility.

8. The proposed Project is of such design, location and purpose that will produce minimal adverse effects.

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

Order

The Commission orders:

1. Certificate of Site Compatibility for an Energy Conversion Facility No. 39 is issued to Sunflower for the construction, operation and maintenance of an energy conversion facility known as the Sunflower Wind Energy Project.
2. The site as proposed in the application is located in Morton County and Stark County, North Dakota, near the City of Hebron, North Dakota, and is designated as the site for construction of the wind energy facility.
3. Within the permitted area, Sunflower is authorized to site and construct up to 110 MW of wind turbines in proposed and alternate locations, along with electric collection and communication lines, a project substation, access roads, an operations and maintenance building and an interconnection yard, along with other associated facilities as identified in the application and at the hearing.
4. Prior to construction, Sunflower shall file with the Commission a copy of the SHPO concurrence letter, along with a copy of the final Environmental Assessment and resulting findings by the Western Area Power Administration issued pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act.
5. Prior to construction, Sunflower shall file with the Commission a final turbine layout identifying the turbine models utilized, along with the approved turbine locations it intends to utilize for this Project.
6. The Certification relating to Order Provisions-Wind Energy Conversion Facility Siting with attached Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications executed by Sunflower and filed with the Commission on May 19, 2014, are incorporated by reference and attached to this Order.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Randy Christmann
Commissioner



Brian P. Kalk
Chairman



Julie Fedorchak
Commissioner

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

Certificate of Site Compatibility Number 39


This is to certify that the Commission has designated an energy conversion facility site for Sunflower Wind Project, LLC's Sunflower Wind Energy Project consisting of up to 110 MW of total wind turbine generating capacity and associated facilities in Stark and Morton 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-14-105 dated June 25, 2014 and is subject to the conditions and limitations noted in the order.


Bismarck, North Dakota, June 20, 2014.

ATTEST:

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION



Executive Secretary
(Acting)



Commissioner

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**

SUNFLOWER WIND PROJECT, LLC
WIND ENERGY CONVERSION FACILITY –
STARK AND MORTON SITING APPLICATION

CASE NO. PU-14-105

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

I am Derek Harding, a representative of Sunflower Wind Project, LLC ("Company") with authority to bind Company to requirements to be set forth by the Commission in its Order and I certify the following:

1. Company 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 Company shall be responsible for compliance with this order and conditions and criteria set forth in the applicable laws and rules.
2. Company agrees to hold a preconstruction conference prior to commencement of any construction, which must include a Company representative, its construction supervisor, and a representative of Commission Staff, to ensure that Company fully understands the conditions set forth in the Commission's order.
3. Company 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. Company 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. Company agrees to inform the Commission and the Commission's third-party construction inspector of its intent to start construction on the energy conversion facility prior to the commencement of construction. Once construction has started, Company shall keep the Commission and the Commission's third-party construction inspector updated of construction activities on a weekly basis.
6. Company 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. Company 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. Company agrees to construct and operate the energy conversion facility in accordance with all applicable safety requirements.
9. Company agrees to construct and operate the energy conversion facility in the manner described in Company's application, in any late filed exhibits, and supplemental materials, (Application). To the extent there are any conflicts or inconsistencies between Company's Application and the provisions in this Certification Relating to Order Provisions, the Certification provisions control.
10. Company agrees to report promptly to the Commission the presence in or near the approved site of any critical habitat of threatened species, endangered species, bald eagles, or golden eagles that Company becomes aware of and which were not previously reported to the Commission.
11. Company 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.
12. Company 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.
13. Company understands and agrees that all buried facility crossings of graded roads shall be bored unless the responsible governing agency specifically permits Company to open cut the road.
14. Company 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.

15. Company 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.
16. Company 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. 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.
17. Company 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.
18. Company 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.
19. Company understands and agrees that its obligation for reclamation and maintenance of the approved site will continue throughout the life of the energy conversion facility.
20. Company 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.
21. Company agrees to comply with the Tree and Shrub Mitigation Specifications, attached.
22. Company 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.
23. Company understands and agrees that it shall repair or replace all drainage tile broken or damaged as a result of construction and operation of the proposed energy conversion facility.

24. Company 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.
25. Company understands and agrees that staging areas or equipment shall not be located on land owned by a person other than Company unless otherwise negotiated with landowners.
26. Company 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.
27. Company 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.
28. Company 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.
29. Company understands and agrees that it shall provide any necessary safety measures for traffic control or to restrict public access to the energy conversion facility.
30. Company 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.
31. Company 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.
32. Company understands and agrees that it shall implement a procedure for how complaints concerning the proposed energy conversion facility will be handled by Company
33. Company agrees to provide the Commission with engineering design drawings showing surveyed structure and collection substation locations prior to construction.

34. Company 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. Company 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.
35. Company agrees to provide the Commission with both an electronic and a paper copy of the site approved by the Commission and the facility 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 3 months of the completion of the construction. Company also agrees to provide an electronic version of the site approved by the Commission and the facility design specifications for the construction of the energy conversion facility showing the location of the energy conversion facility as built 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.
36. Company is aware that under North Dakota Century Code section 49-02-27 the Commission has rules for decommissioning of wind energy conversion facilities. Company agrees to comply with all decommissioning rules adopted by the Commission.
37. Company 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.
38. Company understands and agrees that in the event Company 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 Company's application in this proceeding, Company shall apply for a Certificate of Site Compatibility for the facility.
39. Company 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, Company 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.

40. 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 14th day of May, 2014.

Sunflower Wind Project, LLC

By Wendy M. Neij

Its Manager

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**

Sunflower Wind Project, LLC
Wind Energy Conversion Facility –
Stark and Morton Siting Application

Case No. PU-14-105

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).