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Testimony to the North Dakota Public Service Commission in regard to Rolette Power Development, LLC's request for approval for a wind farm siting permit.

Commissioners: Julie Fedorchak (ch.), Randy Christman, Brian Kalk

It is my pleasure to present testimony today in support of Rolette Power Development as they seek approval from the North Dakota Public Service Commission for a wind farm siting permit. This day is one step in a long process that is truly showing the signs of what perseverance and patience can accomplish.

I became pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church here in Rolette in 1996. About that time our parish was bequeathed a quarter of farmland northeast of town. Within a couple years I was learning about utility easements as the Harvey-Melita transmission line was being constructed across one corner of the property, adjacent to a few acres that were not farmable because of hilly and wet conditions. I was also learning about community development and entrepreneurship attending Senator Conrad's Marketplace of Ideas and particularly about wind at Senator Dorgan's Wind conferences. At one point I asked Jay Haley of EAPC just how to get involved in wind development as an individual and as a community. His one word answer was "Invest."

When the Energy and Environmental Research Center at the University of North Dakota announced a wind monitoring equipment loan program, I put the pieces together and applied for a tower on behalf of the parish. Our application was accepted and for the next two years, every month or two, I made a pilgrimage to the high spot on the parish quarter to swap out the recording bug and send the information back to EERC. In spite of the fact that we recorded the highest wind speeds up to that time on one of the loaner towers, at least one that remained standing, the results proved disappointing as the wind resource in that area is tempered by its proximity to the Turtle Mountains. I received a few inquiries from others interested in this area and always pointed them back to EERC and the public record their efforts around the state had produced. I invited local REC board members to join me at the Wind conferences and kept them updated about our wind monitoring outcome.

A couple years later I heard about M-Power over in the Finley area. They were seeking investors in a second stage of their footprint development for a second wind generation project. The size of the investment share in the project made it reasonable to consider on a personal level and I was delighted to hear about the opportunity to invest in a wind energy development project that sought local involvement and was making real headway. In hindsight, I wish I had pulled the trigger on their prospectus.

I moved down to a different parish in Rugby in 2007 and observed as their community watched the wind towers go up along Highway 17 connecting to that same Harvey-Melita transmission line. Another

project east of Rolla has tapped the same infrastructure. Thankfully life was more settled (and personal cash more available) when Border Power began their efforts to raise the initial capital to develop a third wind farm footprint along that same transmission line. When I heard that folks who I had come to know in Rolette were following in the footsteps of M-Power, I was finally ready to act on the advice Jay Haley had given all those years earlier. I invested.

I invested not just because it was an opportunity to make some money (although that didn't hurt). I invested because I believe in the necessity of a greener power supply and specifically wind generated electricity. I invested because the wind and the transmission capacity are here. I invested because I see the potential for a positive impact of this kind of development in our communities. I invested because I had seen the success of M-Power in Griggs County. I invested because the people of Rolette and the surrounding area who were on the board of directors had become friends in the eleven years I spent here as a pastor. I invested because it was the fulfillment of a personal dream – one that goes back to junior high and newspaper articles I read about a new type of windmill that a local inventor was working on.

A lot of work has been done. The wind resource has been demonstrated. Merle Boucher has arranged for the easements from landowners. Environmental concerns have been studied and addressed. Permits for access to the transmission grid have proven feasible. There is interest from responsible parties in turning the information compiled here into a real life wind farm. Our board members have kept the project on track and the vision in front of all of us. I'm proud to be an investor in a project that has already produced a return in the community capital built. I would very much like to see our financial investments pay off as well. I encourage you to decide in favor of Rolette Power Development's application. I look forward to the fruit it will bear.

I was involved with the last Public Service Commission hearing in Rolette. A little over 8 years ago I spearheaded a Zap the Gap petition drive to improve cellular telephone reception in this area as part of the activities of the Rolette Area Development Association. (I still remember Commissioner Clark trying to get a signal on his phone in this building). I was delighted several months later when I received a call in my new parish from a Rolette resident, a call he was able to place from his living room, because a new tower had just gone on line out of town.

I trust that the work done by Border Power and M-Power will similarly bear fruit for this community, this group of investors, and for responsible electricity users throughout the region and across the grid. I encourage you to approve Rolette Power Development's application for a wind farm siting permit. Thank you for your consideration.

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