

Jeffcoat-Sacco, Illona

From: Nitschke, Darrell D.
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2018 2:15 PM
To: Jeffcoat-Sacco, Illona; Fahn, Patrick J.; -Grp-PSC Public Utilities
Subject: FW: Emmons-Logan Wind Energy Center project
Attachments: Emmons-Logan Wind Energy Ctr Project Ltr.pdf

From: Blair, Sharon <sharon_blair@fws.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 06, 2018 1:38 PM
To: Nitschke, Darrell D. <dnitschk@nd.gov>
Cc: Scott Larson <scott_larson@fws.gov>; Natalie Gates <natalie_gates@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: Emmons-Logan Wind Energy Center project

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Please see letter attached per request of Scott Larson

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Hours available 6:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. CDT M-F

The old Lakota was wise.

He knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard.

He knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too. ~Chief Luther Standing Bear

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Agency correspondence

United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife
Service
Scott Larson

50 PU-18-280 Filed: 12/6/2018 Pages: 3
Agency correspondence

United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife
Service
Scott Larson

United States Department of the Interior



IN REPLY REFER TO:
Emmons-Logan Wind
Energy Center

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE North Dakota Ecological Services

3425 Miriam Avenue
Bismarck, North Dakota 58501-7926

December 3, 2018



Darrel Nitschke
Executive Secretary
ND Public Service Commission
600 E. Boulevard, Dept. 408
Bismarck, ND 58505-0480

Dear Mr, Nitschke:

It is our understanding that a public hearing regarding the Emmons-Logan Wind Energy Center project by NextEra, will be held in Linton, North Dakota, on December 7, 2018, and that a decision by the Public Service Commission (PSC) on whether to permit the project may occur shortly thereafter. We herein recommend that the PSC seek additional plans from NextEra to offset wildlife and habitats in the project area before issuing a development permit for the Emmons-Logan Wind Energy Center.

NextEra has been in contact with our agency (the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service)) regarding the Emmons-Logan project, and we have provided you with a copy of our October 5, 2018, correspondence regarding environmental concerns, policies, laws, and guidance relevant to the project. The Service has advised NextEra to avoid impacts to prairies in particular, and some project modifications have been made to reduce such impacts. However, due to the project location in a relatively high-resource area, both direct and indirect impacts, including those to grassland birds and waterfowl which are trust resources for the Service, are still anticipated.

We have indicated to NextEra that two peer reviewed, published papers representing the best available science on this issue should be applied to this project: Loesch et al. (2013) and Shaffer and Buhl (2016) (note the latter study was funded by NextEra and conducted on NextEra facilities). These studies reveal a broader impact of wind developments beyond their project footprints. Tools developed based on the research results of these papers are available to NextEra that allow for calculation of avian displacement impacts as well as formulation of commensurate offsets.

NextEra has indicated to us that they would develop a voluntary plan to address these impacts for our review by October 31, 2018. As of this writing, we have not received such a plan. We recommend delaying issuance of a permit until the company provides appropriate means to offset anticipated impacts to North Dakota habitats and wildlife that will be affected by this wind project.

We are happy to work with NextEra as they formulate such plans. If we can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact Natalie Gates at (605) 224-8693, Extension 227.

Sincerely,

Fur/ Natalie Gates

Scott Larson
Field Supervisor
North Dakota/South Dakota Field Offices