

NORTHERN DIVIDE WIND AND TRANSMISSION

To: Public Service Commissioners:

Case No. PU-19-376

This letter is to share our opinion about the wind towers in Burke County. Townships including, Fay Keller, Harmonious, and Leaf Mountain.

We are both in favor of the project in Burke County. We will be the ones living and dealing with the project from start to finish. We have done some research on this project and feel there are more positive points for approval.

This will be a financial gain for Burke County in all aspects. Tax revenue for the county. There will be 5-7 full time jobs, with many full time-part time jobs during construction of the wind project. The county schools will gain more students. The businesses in Burke County will gain income. The many vacant houses in Burke County will be sold or rented during the building of the wind farm. This project will also help fill the many other vacant jobs in the area. Including teachers, nurses, store clerks, snow removal, lawn care services etc... The oil field in now in a downward spiral, these workers are looking to stay in the area. This project would give them an opportunity to get a good paying job.

We called Burke/Divide electric in Columbus, ND about what happens with the energy the wind towers generate. We were informed about 20% of the power Basin Electric buys is from wind energy. Basin Electric supplies power to Burke/Divide Electric. Wind towers will generate clean, low-cost energy.

We visited a wind farm in Center, North Dakota. We were able to drive within 200 yards of the wind tower; the noise level was very minimal. No birds were lying dead beside the towers. The roads to the towers were well maintained.

During the PSC meeting on April 17, 2020 I heard some concern about the bird population. Lynn was a postal rural route carrier in Crosby, North Dakota for 25 years. He was contacted by North Dakota game and fish to file a quarterly wildlife report. He would observe birds on the route and record the finding. He observed quite a few bald eagles on the rural route by Crosby, North Dakota. On our own property in the Northern Divide wind project, we have only seen a few bald eagles in the last 30 years. Most of the birds are using the area as a resting ground, not nesting.

Our land is only a few miles from the Wildwood park area which Karen Smith mentioned in her testimony. According to Tara Fox, (Next- era energy employee) no tower will be located near the Wildwood park. The closest tower will be in Fay township Sec. 31-162-93, which is in compliance with the setback regulations. Currently, Wildwood park includes and is surrounded by tillable acres. We are avid users of Wildwood park for hiking, snow shoeing and leisure activities. Our observation is there will be no disturbance in the park area for the wildlife. In comparison, which kills more birds: motor

vehicles, hunters, hawks, coyotes, fox, cats, clean windows. OR wind towers? We would say the first part is more of a wildlife killer than towers.

Currently, we have a small grain farm in the Northern Divide wind farm project area. If you take 10 acres at 50 bushel per acre equals 500 bushels times \$20.00/per bushel equals \$10,000.00. Minus expenses of labor, seed, fertilizer, equipment, fuel and taxes. I have seen \$20.00 per bushel once in my lifetime. One wind tower equal \$10,000.00, which is paid yearly. One wind tower is constant income and takes up less than 10 acres.

Lisa is employed at United States Customs and Border protection at Noonan, North Dakota. She talks to many Boundary Dam and Shan power plant employees. They are all worried about the cut back in coal power plants in Canada. There has been major lay off in the coal and power industry in Estevan, Sask. Canada. Boundary Dam is one of the leading coal plants with environmental clean air scrubbers. There is an existing transmission line that comes from these power plants in Canada to the United States that supplies energy to Basin Electric. If these power plants shut down, where will the electric power be generated from? WIND and SOLAR

In Closing, we believe the wind industries will be a win-win project for the entire area. The revenue generated will help all areas in Burke County. Schools, fire and ambulance, first responders, roads, and local land owners.

Please consider a **YES** vote for the Northern Divide Wind Farm Project.

Thank you in advance,

Lynn and Lisa Watterud

9707 County Rd. 6

Columbus, North Dakota 58727

SEC. 35-34-162-94- Keller township

SEC. 1 and 2 161-94-Harmonious township