

North Dakota Public Service Commission

Re: Northern Divide Wind Project (Case No. PU-19-376) and Transmission Line (PU-19-377)

From: Aaron Jacobson 11327 ND 5 NW, Noonan, ND 58765

I am writing to voice my opposition to the proposed industrial wind farm in Burke County called the Northern Divide Wind Project.

I own Land in Burke County some of which is a mile from the footprint. I rent a pasture that will have towers on 3 sides of it thus eliminating my ability to use the predator control airplane to kill coyotes before I start calving in that pasture, nor will I be able to use any aerial applicator to spray noxious weeds.

Please know that all of the testimony I gave at the PSC hearing in Bowbells last year is still relevant and I would like that all reviewed and allowed as part of my testimony for this project also.

Please review the testimony from the first hearing and find where an individual in opposition to the project testified about how he felt he had been lied to, and misled into signing a friendly neighbor agreement and now was going to have many turbines very close to his house. I asked if he was going to comment again this time and was told that he and his father were reprimanded by Nextera, and told not to make any comments in opposition. I feel this is a very bad tactic for a many Billion-dollar business to use against a small young farmer trying to get started.

The wind energy business is not sustainable without the production tax credit. This tax credit is set to expire, and Nancy Pelosi tried to insert it into the C.A.R.E. stimulus package as a way to sneak it through congress without any discussion or opposition. I don't know if she was successful or not as I haven't seen the whole bill as it was written. I feel that any fiscal conservative should oppose all production tax credits and all private industry should be able to financially sustain its self without government help.

Are there any mitigated acres involved with this proposed project? If so, that is just one more example of the destructive effect this project will have on our area.

The first time this project was proposed it covered a larger area of Burke County and was voted against by the Zoning board with only one vote of support. The zoning board this time had a split decision supporting the project. It should be noted that not one of the zoning board members live anywhere close to the new project, and only one member has changed, and that the western part of Burke county has no representation. I feel that once the project was not going to be in there back yard they didn't care. Two of the county commissioners live in town and very far away from the project, one has a family financial benefit from the project, and all three live where they will not see or hear the project.

If the first project was moved due to its detrimental effects on Lost Wood National wildlife refuge why is my property and wildlife any different? Condensing the project into a smaller area will only increase the detrimental effects on the property, wildlife, people, and God Given beauty of the area.

I asked at the first hearing if any of the members of the PSC had driven through the proposed area and enjoyed the scenery, and none had. I hope and encourage that all members tour the area before making a decision. This is a very unique part of God's creation and there is non like it in North Dakota.

There are already industrial wind farms between Minot and Bismarck, why not build more in that area if they are truly needed as the view is already destroyed and thus eliminating the need for more transmission lines and moving the energy further.

Much of the proposed project will be within 3 miles of Divide County which has a 3 mile set back from any occupied residence for wind turbines. This project was made aware of this yet didn't pay any mind to Divide County or those of us who will have to look at this project from our property in Divide County.

In conclusion I strongly encourage you to save a small rural, beautiful area and population from the destruction of an out of state big business running on our tax dollars. I have included a letter I wrote to the Burke County Tribune in November of 2019 to be included in my testimony.

#### OPPOSE INDUSTRIAL WIND FARM IN BURKE COUNTY

If a snake oil salesman showed up and was selling you a product that was too good to be true, would you question it, do some research, or maybe just walk away from it? If a doctor said you have a life-threatening illness would you question him or go and get a second opinion? I am concerned that people supporting the proposed industrial wind project in Burke County are only listening to the salesman. As a land owner in Burke County and someone who could have to live with these the remainder of my productive life I am opposed to the industrial wind project and will outline some of my concerns in this letter.

The first reason being the devaluation of our property. It has been said by supporters of the project that we shouldn't tell people what to do with their property. But when what one person does on their property devalues mine, takes away my ability to enjoy mine, has negative affects on the health of our community as well as natural beauty of our unique part of God's creation, and displaces wildlife I certainly feel it is our responsibility to oppose such a project. We are already told what we can and can't do on our private property examples being needing a housing permit to build, being told what type of drain field and septic system we can install, where or if we can dig gravel, or simply being told to control noxious weeds on our land.

The proponents of the industrial wind farm claim this project will bring 1 million dollars into Burke County per year. But that is peanuts compared to the 5.5 Billion dollars they have received in tax credits, and doesn't include green credits or other incentives they receive. The 5.5-billion-dollar tax credit is taking money out of every tax payers pocket and making wealthy people richer. For perspective, 5.5 billion dollars is more than North Dakota has in the Legacy fund. A quote from Warren Buffet speaking in front of a wind developer meeting said "If it wasn't for the production tax credit there is no reason to build these things". Will the claimed 1 million really end up in Burke County? I don't feel it will. Of the projected towers, less than 35% will be placed on land owned by people residing in Burke county and of those who do reside in Burke county less than 20% actually live in the footprint of the project.

At a hearing held for the project that was denied we heard from a commercial air plane applicator that he can't spray any where close to these towers. If the ability to use airplanes to control weeds or apply fungicides as well as predator control is taken away from property that is close to the proposed towers that certainly devalues that property.

If the reason for moving the project away from Lostwood Wildlife Refuge was concern over wildlife and habitat destruction, why is my land any different, or any part of Burke County?

The western part of the foothills and coteau in Burke County is very unique in its beauty and people come from far and wide to enjoy its weather, its bird watching, hiking, hunting, bike riding or simply to enjoy the uninterrupted scenery of God's creation.

The development of an Industrial wind tower requires huge amounts of materials and actually will consume more energy to build than it will ever produce in its life span. The U.S. Geological Survey: Scientific investigations Report 2011-5036 reports that on average 1 megawatt of wind capacity requires 103 tons of stainless steel, 402 tons of concrete, 6.8 tons of fiberglass, 3 tons of copper, and 20 tons of cast iron. We haven't even begun to talk about the gravel required to build new roads or strengthen existing roads. The truck carrying the turbine is 218,000 pounds gross weight, a truck carrying tower steel sections weighs from 175,000 to 232,000 pounds, plus all the trucks required to carry concrete, rebar and other materials. Some roads will have to be straightened to get the extremely long loads in and corners and approaches widened. Plus, each turbine contains up to 80 gallons of oil that has to be changed every 12-18 months, and every truck or piece of equipment mining, building, and hauling the parts needs fossil fuels to operate.

The noise produced by these is detrimental to the health and well being of anyone living or working by these. A peer reviewed study published in Noise and Health titled "Effects of industrial wind turbine noise on sleep and health" by Nissenbaum, Aramini, and Hanning concluded that the noise emissions of industrial wind turbines disturbed the sleep and caused daytime sleepiness and impaired mental health in residents living within 4593 feet of a tower, Their research suggested that adverse effects are observed at distances even beyond.

We have been told that the shadow flicker is not an issue, and the blinking lights at night are not going to cause harm to our quality of life and health, by people paid to find that conclusion. If I could afford it, I could provide experts that would refute every claim made.

Why have some non-participants in the project area signed or been offered Good Neighbor Agreements giving up their right to complain about the effects this will have on them? Yet others have not even been communicated with to ask how they feel.

It has been said that these are no different than looking at an oil well. An oil well is not even remotely close to the height of a wind tower. The North Dakota capital building is 242 feet and the proposed towers will easily be much taller and could possibly even double that height.

It has been said that the developer of the proposed industrial wind farm has worked with the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to develop the project. If that were true the project would have never proceeded. In a letter dated March 7, 2019 from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department to the ND Public Service commission the following was stated:

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department first learned of the proposed Burke County Wind Energy Center at a joint agency meeting with NextEra and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in September of 2016. During this first consultation, Department staff voice considerable concern and indicated that the applicant “could not have picked a worse spot in the state” with regards to potential negative impacts to prairie and wetland wildlife species. Despite hearing these concerns, NextEra continued to move forward with the project, signing a Power Purchase Award (PPA) only one month later. It should be noted that this PPA was signed prior to any wildlife/habitat studies being done.

When the opposition to the proposed industrial wind farm brought signatures of people opposed to the project the attorney for NextEra requested the committee not consider or acknowledge the petition. These are signatures of people who were not able to attend the meeting themselves for many reasons including jobs and harvest. If people are not able to show opposition by signing a petition, I ask that the hearings be held in the evening or at times when all with concerns can attend.

In conclusion I hope to have showed that industrial wind farms are inefficient and not a consistent supplier of energy. No industrial economy ever powered itself on wind; no such country ever will. Calm days are very real things; whereas grid-scale electrical storage is a myth.

Sadly, the name of the project is the only thing I find fitting as it has certainly caused a huge divide in our community.

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