

Hamre, John G.

From: Eberl, Stacy L.
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2020 4:40 PM
To: Hamre, John G.
Subject: FW: NextEra Wind Project in Burke County
Attachments: Wind Turbine Remarks.docx

John, please docket the attached letter for PU-19-376 and PU-19-377. Thanks!

From: Amber Haugland <amberhaugland@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2020 4:22 PM
To: -Info-Public Service Commission <ndpsc@nd.gov>
Subject: Fwd: NextEra Wind Project in Burke County

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Please find the attached letter regarding the NextEra Wind project proposed in Burke County. Let me know if you have any questions. Thank you!
Amber

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Amber Haugland <amberhaugland@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 27, 2020 at 4:20 PM
Subject: NextEra Wind Project in Burke County
To: <ndpsc@nd.gob>

Please find the attached letter regarding the NextEra Wind project proposed in Burke County. Let me know if you have any questions. Thank you!
Amber

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Amber Haugland
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150 PU-19-377 Filed 04/27/2020 Pages: 5
Post-hearing Comments
Amber Haugland

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As a native North Dakotan, I grew up in Divide County (a neighbor of Burke County) on the family farm and ranch. I have a deep appreciation for the beautiful prairie we are blessed to call home. The rich sunsets, the wheat fields swaying in the wind, cattle grazing on a native pasture are images that are forever etched on my mind and heart. I moved away for a few years, but North Dakota was calling me home. And home I came.

For the past 9 years, I have been raising my son on the family farm and ranch, passing these values on to him, and running a business as well. My business partners and I bought a hotel and renovated it into the "Crosby Lodge." It is a wildlife inspired lodge located just miles from the proposed wind turbine project. Our greatest occupancy percentage occurs during hunting season, in which hundreds of hunters travel to northwestern North Dakota to enjoy this pastime. Our small town thrives in the fall as hunters flood this region, staying at our hotel, eating at restaurants, buying goods at local businesses and even giving back to our fall fundraising projects such as Dollars for Scholars. Year after year, these hunters come back with their kids and grandkids to enjoy the North Dakota outdoors! Our business receives thousands of dollars of income from hunters coming to our region.

Renewable energy, like wind energy, is not free from impact. The impact to our natural and human resources is costly. The land that we call home is the prairie pothole region, a part of the central flyway, of which millions of ducks and geese annually migrate. This migratory pattern brings millions of dollars to our region every year. By allowing these wind turbines to be constructed in the middle of the prairie pothole region, this will result in birds diverting their migratory patterns around this region. This would be devastating to not only my business but to many local businesses. Some landowners are receiving lucrative payments to place turbines on their property, however a handful of landowners increasing their bottom line does not offset the economic distress to many families running businesses and paying employees in our community. Our ability to pay our employees comes directly from our income and if income declines drastically due to hunters not coming to our community, we will be forced to lay off our employees and potentially limit our facility or even shut down if the decline is drastic enough.

My family also owns land in Burke County, of which four wind turbines will be placed within one mile of the property. This land is land that my parents purchased for our family to ride horses, hike and hunt on. The wildlife that frequent this property include moose, deer, turkey, pheasants, ducks, geese, rabbits, and possibly whooping cranes. This property adjoins the Wildwood State Park and is very scenic, heavily wooded in spots with rolling hills between. This land is a legacy property, one which will be passed down to the next generation for the family to enjoy and continue these traditions on. It is devastating to think that four wind turbines, each within one mile of this breathtaking property, could soon be the focal point when on this land. Our family has no intention of ever selling this property, but consider the decline in value to this land as well as many other properties adjoining this project. In my opinion, if NextEra is allowed to move forward with this project, we are allowing our natural resources to be sold out for a fast buck. As a native North Dakotan, my values are not for sale. And why would we sell out this beautiful region to the wind energy industry that produces only 5.5% of our electricity across the United States (according to imaginethat.org)? The decline in property values, the loss of income to businesses that benefit from hunting, the ability to provide jobs for families, and the devastation to the land are all reasons to vote no on this project.

All forms of technology, and especially wind technology, are quickly advancing. Many teenagers today have never heard of a dot matrix printer or a tape player. In similar fashion, if allowed to proceed, the wind turbines that are being proposed will soon be obsolete giants dotting our landscape. A relative of mine has recently invested in a tech firm that has developed a much smaller wind turbine that is no larger than an enclosed trailer. It's pulled behind a pickup and sets up in one hour. It provides enough wind energy to power four homes. This appears to be the next advancement in wind energy technology. What will wind energy look like in five years? It's difficult to predict, but depending on the source, wind energy companies will tell you the turbines have a life span of 15-25 years, although other outside sources estimate it closer to 10 years. Consider if the life span was 15 years. What if these turbines are no longer profitable and are essentially old technology that isn't worth repairing or replacing? It is likely that these turbines will simply be sitting idle with no one to maintain them and keep them functioning properly. Worse yet, in 15 years, this company could declare bankruptcy and walk away from these turbines? Yes, these companies are required to put up a reclamation bond, but the size of the bond will not even be close to what will be required to reclaim this land. Who will pick up that cost? It will be left to our counties...to our kids or our grandkids. I have to question the sustainability of this project as well. Without federal tax credits and the rush to get this project going before they expire, this project would never have been on the table. Wind energy has not proven to stand on its own without flooding tax dollars to these companies. Why would we abandon our values for something that's not even sustainable?

Western North Dakota has seen its share of changes due to the oil activity in the past decade. We have seen our farm and grasslands scraped aside to allow for oil sites and disposals. We have seen it disrupt our natural resources including taking thousands of acres of habitat in the prairie pothole region. If we add wind turbines to this equation, we can essentially consider Northwestern North Dakota an industrial park. I love North Dakota and I did not move back so I could live next to a monstrosity towering above our land and adding more concrete to the ground creating an industrial park.

I am also frustrated with the fact that Burke County has disregarded the plea from the residents of Divide County. Divide County requires a 3 mile setback from any residences, whereas Burke County only requires ½ mile. There are proposed turbines that will be located within one mile from the Divide County line and within 3 miles of Divide County residences. The Divide County commissioners wrote a letter to Burke County's commissioners pleading with them to be a good neighbor and respect Divide County's 3 mile setbacks. Burke County Commissioners never responded to Divide County Commissioners' request. As a resident of Divide County and also with family land located in Burke County, this is infuriating to me. In North Dakota we pride ourselves on being good neighbors, but sadly that is not the case in this situation. When I sat in the Burke County courtroom and listened to testimony on both sides of the argument, it was clear that all those who spoke in favor of the project were receiving compensation, many of which were actually out of state landlords. Many of the people who will be benefitting do not even live in North Dakota. This is alarming that we would allow a project that, in the long run, will hurt northwestern North Dakota to move forward so that a small amount of people, many of which reside out of state, can benefit.

I am not against the people, but against the project. I am not against the company, but against the principle. I am not against landowners making money, but I am against selling out our natural resources to do so. When tax credits run out, prices decline, corporations fold up and sites are abandoned, someone is left with the mess behind...that's what we're leaving our children. I am asking the PSC to do

what is good and right for the future of North Dakota. My grandparents and my parents made it their aim to make life a little better for the next generation. For that, I am forever grateful. I am asking for your help in making North Dakota a better place for my son and his family to live. Please don't sell out North Dakota for a quick buck...our future depends upon you! Please put a stop to this project today!