

April 6, 2020

North Dakota Public Service Commission
North Dakota State Capitol
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Ste 408
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505

Re: Northern Divide Wind wind project; Case #: PU-19-376

Dear Commissioners,

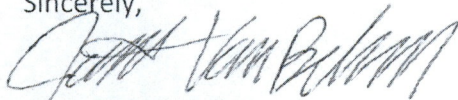
As an elected official of Burke County, North Dakota I want to express my support for the Northern Divide Wind project proposed for Burke County. We approved this project unanimously (and with a recommendation for approval from our planning and zoning board) in November 2019.

I would like you to know why I support the project. It represents numerous benefits for our rural county. It will be a \$400 million investment to our area, that includes construction jobs and also some permanent local jobs. It will pay about \$1 million annually in property taxes to the County and other taxing jurisdictions. It will pay about \$1 million annually in lease payments to Burke County landowners, who have chosen to lease their private property for this energy source. Burke County is not likely to see this level of investment in our county anytime soon.

The project has also been redesigned based upon comments from North Dakota Game and Fish and others regarding wildlife concerns. As I understand Northern Divide Wind has worked with the NDGF to address the concerns, and that it has been reduced in size by about 50%. 44 turbines have been relocated, including 11 that were of concern to Game and Fish, and none of them are now on native prairie. In fact, all of the project footprint is on cropland except 7%, (which is on native prairie).

The developer has told us that they will continue to work with NDGF and the US Fish and Wildlife agencies regarding whooping cranes and habitat fragmentation concerns and ways they can mitigate those concerns. In any event, I believe they have gone to great lengths to modify the project and address many of the concerns raised last year, that caused you to reject the original proposal. With everything that is happening in the world today we could use some economic activity in Burke County. I support the project and ask that you give it your approval also.

Sincerely,



Jarret Van Berkom
Burke County Commissioner

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Exhibit PC17 - Jarret Van Berkom

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