

**NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**MINNESOTA POWER  
LONGSPUR WIND PROJECT  
APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF SITE COMPATIBILITY  
LONGSPUR 230kV TRANSMISSION LINE  
CONSOLIDATED APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF CORRIDOR  
COMPATIBILITY AND ROUTE PERMIT**

**CASE NOS. PU-25-304 AND PU-25-305**

**MAY 6, 2026  
PART I**

**PREPARED TESTIMONY OF  
CHERYL FROELICH**

1     **I.     Introduction and Background**

2     **Q1.     Please state your name, by whom you are employed, and your business address.**

3     A.     My name is Cheryl Froelich. I am employed by BNI Coal. My business address is 1637  
4            Burnt Boat Drive, Bismarck, ND 58503.

5     **Q2.     What is your position with BNI Coal?**

6     A.     I am the director of external affairs for BNI Coal and the ALLETE Sr. Government Affairs  
7            Representative.

8     **Q3.     Briefly describe your educational background and professional experience.**

9     A.     I hold business degrees from Bismarck State College, and University of Mary. I am a  
10           certified human resource professional, having spent the past 24 years working in the energy  
11           industry and more recently external affairs.

12    **Q4.     What is your role with respect to the Longspur Wind Project (“Wind Project”) and  
13            the Longspur 230kV Transmission Line (“Transmission Project”) (collectively, the  
14            “Projects”)?**

15    A.     In my external and government affairs role, it has been my responsibility to assist the  
16           technical and operations team members in working with and educating various local and  
17           state stakeholders in North Dakota about the Projects.

1 **Q5. Please explain the purpose of your testimony.**

2 A. The purpose of my testimony is to provide information regarding the history of ALLETE,  
3 Inc. and Minnesota Power in the community, the Projects' background and need, and the  
4 Projects' economic benefits.

5  
6 **Q6. What is the relationship between ALLETE, Inc. and Minnesota Power?**

7 A. Minnesota Power is a regulated utility company based in Duluth, Minnesota, and is a  
8 business unit of ALLETE, Inc. The Longspur Wind facility and associated transmission  
9 line will be owned and operated by Minnesota Power.

10

11 **Q7. Can you please explain the history of ALLETE and its affiliates in North Dakota, and  
12 specifically in Morton and Mercer Counties and the surrounding communities?**

13 A. ALLETE and its affiliates have been a part of the North Dakota landscape since the 1970's  
14 through agreements that utilized North Dakota's energy infrastructure to help provide  
15 electricity to Minnesota Power. Minnesota Power provides electricity in an approximately  
16 26,000-square-mile electric service territory located in northeastern Minnesota. Minnesota  
17 Power serves approximately 150,000 residents, 14 municipalities and some of the nation's  
18 largest mining and paper industries in and around northern Minnesota. BNI Coal, a lignite  
19 mine near Center, North Dakota, was acquired by ALLETE in 1988. The mine supplies  
20 coal to two electric generating cooperatives, Minnkota Power and Square Butte, which  
21 operate the Milton R. Young Station.

22

23 Development of the Bison Wind Energy Center started in 2006 in Oliver County. It was  
24 built in four phases spanning Oliver and Morton counties between 2010 and 2015. At  
25 nearly 500 megawatts (MW), Bison utilizes a dedicated High-Voltage Direct Current  
26 (HVDC) transmission line to send power directly to northern Minnesota customers. The  
27 Glen Ullin Energy Center in Morton and Mercer Counties was completed in late 2019.  
28 Both Bison and Glen Ullin are staffed by ALLETE affiliated companies with North Dakota  
29 employees.

30

1 **Q8. Explain how Minnesota Power has demonstrated its commitment to being involved**  
2 **with the local community.**

3 A. Through the ALLETE family of companies, we have approximately 205 current employees  
4 in North Dakota. Over the past 15 years, our companies have contributed more than \$1  
5 million in donations to local communities across the areas we live and work. We were  
6 proud to support the New Salem School digital sign and New Salem Fitness Center projects  
7 in the past, and more recently the City of Center pool project. We routinely support  
8 emergency response including fire and ambulance in New Salem, Center, Glen Ullin and  
9 beyond through monetary donations as well as sponsoring training. Several of our  
10 employees who live in these areas also serve local fire and ambulance services. We support  
11 them in doing so by participating in full-scale mock emergency response drills and  
12 allowing employees time away from work. We have also assisted in snow removal on  
13 adjacent county roads and even local high school football fields when called upon.

14 Minnesota Power pays about \$2 million in tax to North Dakota annually. Currently all of  
15 this revenue is allocated to the counties, except for an extremely nominal slice of real  
16 property tax paid on behalf of landowners. While I am not an accountant or tax expert, I  
17 understand that tax revenue from windfarms constructed after 2020 is split with 67% going  
18 to local political subdivisions and 33% going to the state's general fund. These tax  
19 payments are in addition to tax revenue paid by other ALLETE companies such as  
20 ALLETE Clean Energy, ALLETE Renewable Resources, and BNI.

21  
22 **Q9. Please explain the need for the Projects.**

23 A. In January 2023, the Minnesota Public Utility Commission ("MPUC") approved  
24 Minnesota Power's 2021 Integrated Resource Plan ("2021 IRP"). In February of 2024,  
25 Minnesota Power issued a Request for Proposals ("RFP") for up to 400MW of wind  
26 generation projects in response to its 2021 IRP. Following the RFP, Minnesota Power  
27 requested MPUC approval for the approximately 200 MW Longspur wind powered  
28 electricity generating facility in Morton County, North Dakota. In March of 2026, the  
29 MPUC approved Minnesota Power's nearly \$800 million investment in the Longspur  
30 Project. Longspur will help support Minnesota Power's generation needs within Minnesota

1 Power's service territory while bringing extensive economic benefits to North Dakota  
2 residents.

3 **Q10. Please describe some of the economic benefits of the proposed Projects?**

4 A. The proposed Projects will have several positive economic impacts. Minnesota Power  
5 estimates that the Wind Project will provide approximately \$33 million in state tax revenue  
6 over 35 years and pay approximately \$19 million in sales tax. The Projects will also provide  
7 over \$62 million in payments to participating landowners over 35 years. These revenues  
8 will not only benefit the counties and participating landowners, but also the local economy  
9 as that money is reinvested in local goods and services. This is a rare opportunity where a  
10 company with a long-term presence in North Dakota is able to make a substantial regulated  
11 utility investment in our state, while having the costs borne by Minnesota state rate payers.

12 **Q11. Does this conclude your testimony?**

13 A. Yes.