

NORTH DAKOTA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

**BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE
PRAIRIEWINDS REPOWER PROJECT
CERTIFICATION AND APPLICATION TO AMEND ORDER AND CERTIFICATE
PRAIRIEWINDS – ND 1 PROJECT
WARD COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA**

CASE NO. PU-26-164

AUGUST 11, 2026

PART I

**PREPARED TESTIMONY OF
KYLE WEISBECK**

Q1. Please state your name, employer, and business address.

A. My name is Kyle Weisbeck. I am employed by Basin Electric Power Cooperative (“Basin Electric”) as Director of Mechanical Engineering. My business address is 1717 East Interstate Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58501.

Q2. In what capacity are you providing this testimony?

A. I am providing this testimony on behalf of Basin Electric in my role as a Project Sponsor for the PrairieWinds – ND 1 Repower Project (the “Upgrade Project”). Basin Electric has submitted a Certification for activities associated with the Upgrade Project and an application requesting an amendment to the Commission’s August 12, 2009 Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order and Certificate of Site Compatibility No. 14 (Case No. PU-08-075) (the “2009 Order”) issued for the PrairieWinds – ND 1 Wind Energy Facility in Ward County, North Dakota.

Q3. Briefly describe your educational background and professional experience.

A. I received a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from North Dakota State University in 2013. I joined Basin Electric in 2014 as a mechanical engineer. I have been a licensed Professional Engineer since 2018. I have worked for Basin Electric for twelve years and my current position with Basin Electric is director of mechanical engineering. In my career I have served as project manager for multiple large capital and plant maintenance

1 projects. I have most recently been serving in advisory roles for new generation and large
2 capital projects.

3 **Q4. What is your role with respect to the Upgrade Project?**

4 A. I serve the Upgrade Project as a project sponsor and the direct supervisor of the Project
5 Manager, involved in the decision-making and project execution processes providing
6 management oversight and technical support.

7 **Q5. Are you familiar with the contents of Basin Electric's Certification for the Upgrade
8 Project as well as the Application to Amend the 2009 Order?**

9 A. Yes. I am familiar with the contents of the Certification document (the "Certification")
10 and the Application to Amend the 2009 Order (the "Application").

11 **Q6. Are there any corrections to the Certification and Application?**

12 Yes. The Application and Certification documents state that the Upgrade Project will
13 increase the total nameplate generating capacity of the facility to 128 megawatt ("MW"),
14 that number should be 123.2 MW.

15 **Q7. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

16 A. My testimony provides an overview of the Upgrade Project, including the history of the
17 existing wind project, the planned repower and upgrades, interconnection, local permitting,
18 landowner coordination, and benefits.

19 **Q8. Please describe the history of the PrairieWinds – ND 1 Wind Energy Facility.**

20 A. In March of 2009, Basin Electric submitted a siting application for the PrairieWinds – ND
21 1 project, located in Ward County, North Dakota. The siting application was for
22 construction, maintenance, and operation of a 115.5 MW wind facility consisting of 77
23 General Electric ("GE") 1.5-MW wind turbines (the "Existing Project"). On August 12,
24 2009, the Commission issued the 2009 Order granting Basin Electric Certificate of Site
25 Compatibility No. 14 (the "Certificate") for the wind facility. Construction of the wind
26 facility began in 2009, and commercial operations commenced in late 2009.

27 **Q9. Please describe the Upgrade Project.**

28 A. The Upgrade Project consists of removing and replacing components of the existing GE
29 1.5-MW turbines with GE 1.6-MW generator technology using the GE Verona repowering
30 kits. The upgrades to each turbine include replacing the existing 35-meter (115 feet) blades
31 with new 45-meter (148 feet) blades, replacing the hub, main shaft, main bearing assembly,

1 gearbox, and generator refurbishment. The existing steel towers and foundations from the
2 Existing Project will be reused and there will be no new turbine locations. The Upgrade
3 Project will occur entirely within the previously certificated site boundary for the Existing
4 Project.

5 The Upgrade Project will increase the maximum turbine height by 32.8 feet and increase
6 the maximum output of each turbine by 0.1 MW. The nameplate capacity of the Existing
7 Project will increase to approximately 123.2 MW, but the maximum operational output
8 will remain the same, pursuant to the existing interconnection agreement. Currently, there
9 are five turbines that are offline due to maintenance needs. These turbines will also be
10 repaired by the Upgrade Project. The Upgrade Project will require portions of existing
11 access roads to be temporarily widened to accommodate delivery and staging of equipment
12 and components. A temporary laydown yard will be used during installation of the
13 upgraded components. The temporary laydown yard, which is located entirely on Basin
14 Electric's owned property, was previously used during the original construction.

15 **Q10. Have there been any changes to the Upgrade Project's design since Basin Electric**
16 **filed its Application with the Commission?**

17 A. There have been no changes to the Upgrade Project's design since the Certification was
18 filed with the Commission.

19 **Q11. Please describe the purpose of Basin Electric's filings for the Upgrade Project.**

20 A. The Commission already issued the Existing Project a Certificate of Site Compatibility for
21 its construction and operation. Because the Upgrade Project includes various
22 improvements to the Existing Project, including an increase to the nameplate capacity,
23 Basin Electric submitted a Certification for these activities pursuant to the Commission's
24 certification process set forth in N.D.C.C. § 49-22-03(4)(a)(4).

25 In addition to the Certification filing, Basin Electric submitted an Application for
26 Amendment requesting the Commission amend the Existing Project's 2009 Order and
27 Certificate to remove the capacity limitations that were originally included, consistent with
28 the Commission's current practice. For reference, the Existing Project's 2009 Order
29 expressly authorized Basin Electric "to site and construct up to 115.5 MW of wind turbines
30" Case No. PU-08-75, 2009 Order Paragraph No. 3. The Certificate issued for the
31 Existing Project limited the facility to 77 "1.5 MW wind turbine generators." Basin

Electric's request asks the Commission to amend the 2009 Order and Certificate to remove these limitations.

Q12. Please describe the benefits of the Upgrade Project.

A. The upgrades will result in a more efficient power curve and will provide increased generation at lower wind speeds compared to the existing turbines. In addition, the Upgrade Project will extend the life of the Existing Project 20 years from the date of the repowering.

Q13. What is the Upgrade Project's estimated cost?

A. The Upgrade Project is estimated to cost approximately \$200 million.

Q14. Will the Upgrade Project require any additional land acquisition?

A. No. Basin Electric has all land agreements necessary for the Upgrade Project. The Upgrade Project will be constructed entirely within the previously designated site, and turbine and other permanent infrastructure locations will remain the same. As part of the Upgrade Project, Basin Electric has voluntarily offered all participating landowners as well as all non-participating landowners within a half-mile of facility turbines a construction inconvenience payment for the Upgrade Project.

Q15. Does the Upgrade Project involve any changes to the Existing Project's electrical collection system and collection substation?

A. No.

Q16. Will there be any changes to the Project's interconnection arrangements?

A. No.

Q17. What is the proposed timeline for construction and operation of the Project?

A. Subject to receipt of Commission approval and other necessary permits, Basin Electric currently anticipates beginning construction of the Upgrade Project in 2026 and placing the Project into commercial operations by Q4 of 2027.

Q18. Provide a brief overview of the Project's construction process.

A. Activities associated with the Upgrade Project will occur entirely within the site designated by the Commission in the 2009 Order. The Upgrade Project will consist of removing and replacing the existing turbine blades, hub, and gearbox. Once removed, the existing blades will be cut on-site to fit into legal load transportation sized pieces. The cut blades will be transported to a recycling facility; no blades will be deposited in a landfill.

1 Prior to installing the upgrade equipment, existing roads will be improved to accommodate
2 heavy vehicle traffic during construction. Road improvements will include adding
3 approximately four inches of aggregate to the road surfaces. Where required, turning radii
4 will be widened to accommodate deliveries. These improvements will be limited to
5 existing roads. In September 2025, in Case No. PU-25-253, Basin Electric submitted a
6 temporary construction variance that requested authorization to commence the above-
7 described road work associated with the Upgrade Project. On September 24, 2025, the
8 Commission approved the temporary variance request. On May 7, 2026, Basin Electric
9 requested an amendment to the temporary variance request in Case No. PU-25-253 to
10 permit temporary road and approach widening, additional aggregate placement, and
11 grading of temporary workspaces. On June 11, 2026, the Commission approved the
12 amendment to the temporary variance request.

13 **Q19. How will topsoil removal be handled during construction?**

14 A. Localized topsoil removal and stockpiling may occur around each turbine location.
15 Measures to control erosion will be implemented during construction. Once construction
16 is complete, decompaction will occur as needed and stockpiled topsoil will be respread and
17 revegetated, following Natural Resources Conservation Service guidelines and/or
18 landowner requests. No adverse impacts to soils are expected as a result of the Upgrade
19 Project.

20 **Q20. During construction, how many temporary construction jobs is the Upgrade Project**
21 **anticipated to create?**

22 A. The Upgrade Project will create around 150 temporary construction jobs, with much of that
23 labor pulled from the local union and surrounding area.

24 **Q21. How does Basin Electric plan to mitigate impacts during construction?**

25 A. Basin Electric will be in communication with Ward County and its affected residents on
26 construction activities to minimize impacts. A Haul Use Agreement (HUA) with Ward
27 County, included under the approved Conditional Use Permit (CUP), requires Basin
28 Electric to maintain the roads during construction per the county's standards. After
29 construction is completed, the HUA requires that Basin Electric restore the roads to a
30 standard above their original state prior to construction. The construction contractor will

develop a detailed schedule, including when specific turbines are set to be upgraded. Basin Electric will communicate with the affected landowners ahead of time to mitigate impacts.

Q22. Does Basin Electric have a process for coordinating with landowners if a landowner has any concerns during or after construction?

A. Prior to construction, all landowners within the Upgrade Project will receive contact information for Basin Electric's Upgrade Project team. Additionally, post-construction reclamation concerns may be directed to Basin Electric's Right-of-Way (ROW) Department.

Q23. Please describe the setbacks applicable to the Upgrade Project.

A. When the 2009 Order and Certificate were issued, the Commission did not have designated setbacks in statute or rule for wind facilities. The Commission's current setbacks, adopted after the Existing Project was sited, do not apply. However, as part of the siting process for the Existing Project, Basin Electric generally maintained certain setbacks from residences, transmission lines, roads and railroads as voluntary mitigation measures. *See* 2009 Order at paragraphs 31-34.

Q24. Has Basin Electric assessed the Upgrade Project pursuant to the Commission's existing setbacks?

A. Yes. Basin Electric has assessed the Upgrade Project pursuant to the Commission's current setback criteria. However, because these setbacks did not exist when the facility was sited, they do not apply. For informational purposes, a table summarizing the Upgrade Project and the Commission's current setbacks is provided below.

Current Commission Wind Project Setback Distances		
Setback Type	Setback Distance	Discussion
Commission		
Interstate and state road right-of-way	1.1 x height of the turbine (= 464 feet)	One turbine (T50) is located within this setback from US Hwy 83 ROW. The NDDOT has indicated the Upgrade Project will have no adverse impacts on NDDOT highways.
Centerline of any county or maintained township roadway	1.1 x height of the plus 75 feet (= 539 feet)	Four turbines (A09, A16, B24, and E74) are within the county road setback. A09 487.67 feet, A16

Current Commission Wind Project Setback Distances		
Setback Type	Setback Distance	Discussion
		166.18 feet, B24 394.92 feet, and E74 255.36 feet. Ward County has issued a CUP for the Upgrade Project.
Railroad right-of-way	1.1 x height of the turbine (= 464 feet)	N/A
115 kV or higher transmission lines	1.1 x height of the turbine (= 464 feet)	One turbine (A09) is located 335 feet from a 115-kV distribution line. Basin Electric is negotiating a waiver with the owner of the transmission line.
Property line of non-participating landowners	1.1 x height of the turbine (= 464 feet)	Three turbines, B19, B31, and D52 are within the property line setback. B19 222.28 feet, B31 401.69 feet, D52 450.43 feet. Basin Electric is voluntarily seeking waivers from these landowners.
Non-participating residences	3 x height of the turbine (= 1265 feet)	Basin Electric is voluntarily seeking waivers from these landowners.
Geographic center of an intercontinental ballistic missile launch or launch control facility	1,200 feet	N/A – The closest turbine is 2,841 feet from an ICMB launch facility

1 **a. Commission setback of 1.1x turbine height from interstate or state roadway right-**
2 **of-way.** One turbine, Turbine D50, does not meet this setback. This setback did not exist
3 at the time of the Existing Project's construction. As originally constructed, Turbine D50
4 did not meet this setback. Basin Electric sent a notice letter to the North Dakota Department
5 of Transportation ("NDDOT") informing NDDOT about the Upgrade Project. On January
6 27, 2026, NDDOT sent a letter to Basin Electric stating, the Upgrade Project "should have
7 no adverse effect on the North Dakota Department of Transportation highways." A copy
8 of the NDDOT letter is located in Appendix G to the Certification.

9 **b. Commission setback of 1.1x turbine height plus 75 feet from centerline of county**
10 **or maintained township roadway.** Four turbines, A09, A16, B24, and E74, are located
11 within the setback area of roads maintained by Ward County. This Commission setback
12 did not exist at the time of the Existing Project's construction. As originally constructed,

1 all four turbines did not meet the current setback. Ward County is aware of the Upgrade
2 Project and has issued a CUP to Basin Electric authorizing the upgrade activities.

3 **c. Commission setback of 1.1x turbine height from 115 kV or higher transmission line**
4 **right-of-way.** One turbine, A09, does not meet this setback. This setback did not exist at
5 the time of the Existing Project's construction. As originally constructed, the Existing
6 Project did not meet this setback. This transmission line is owned by the Western Area
7 Power Administration ("WAPA"). Basin Electric is negotiating with WAPA to obtain a
8 formal waiver of the setback.

9 **d. Commission setback of 1.1x turbine height from property line of nonparticipating**
10 **landowner.** Three turbines, B19, B31, and D52 are within the property line setback. The
11 Application identified five turbines within this setback. After further review, two of the
12 turbine locations (C42 and C43) meet the setback. This setback did not exist at the time of
13 the Existing Project's construction. As originally constructed, these turbines did not meet
14 the current setback. Although setbacks enacted by the Commission subsequent to the siting
15 of the Existing Project do not apply, Basin Electric voluntarily sought waivers from the
16 affected landowners.

17 **Q25. What is the status of local permitting?**

18 A. In March 2026, Basin Electric submitted a CUP application to Ward County for the
19 Upgrade Project. On July 7, 2026, the Ward County Board of Commissioners approved the
20 Upgrade Project's CUP.

21 **Q26. Will the Upgrade Project comply with Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA")**
22 **requirements?**

23 A. Yes. The wind turbines must comply with FAA lighting and marking requirements. The
24 Wind Project has not yet received FAA Determinations of No Hazard for the wind turbine
25 locations. Determinations of No Hazard remain needed for all turbine locations. Basin
26 Electric will obtain Determinations of No Hazard before installing longer blades on
27 turbines for which the authorizations remain outstanding.

1 **Q27. Discuss the personnel that will be involved in operating and maintaining the facility**
2 **once the Upgrade Project is complete.**

3 A. The Existing Project employs eight full-time employees to operate and maintain the
4 facility. This number is expected to be unchanged by the Upgrade Project but the upgrade
5 will extend the life of the facility and the employment of these full-time employees.

6 **Q28. What monitoring and maintenance are necessary for the facility after the Upgrade**
7 **Project is complete?**

8 A. Facility Staff will continue to monitor and maintain the turbines throughout the Upgrade
9 Project and after its completion. Each turbine requires scheduled maintenance activities
10 throughout the year. Examples of turbine maintenance include greasing bearings, torquing,
11 changing filters, base bolt testing, transformer oil testing, and general cleaning practices.
12 The turbine sites are also maintained by the facility employees and inspected after
13 significant weather events such as severe thunderstorms to check for lightning strikes and
14 potential road repairs. Facility employees inspect each turbine site up to three to four times
15 per month. Instrumentation within each turbine on multiple components relays data back
16 to the control room on-site providing real-time information on the status of each turbine.

17 **Q29. How has Basin Electric implemented emergency preparedness for the Existing**
18 **Project and will that continue after the Upgrade Project?**

19 A. Basin Electric has conducted Emergency responders' meetings on site with local fire
20 departments, ambulance services, sheriff, and state patrol. The meetings are to discuss
21 safety processes, coordinating responses and resources for possible incidents at the wind
22 farm. A responder meeting will be scheduled prior to the repower project with the
23 contractors being present to make the local responders aware of the upcoming traffic and
24 added site changes.

25 **Q30. Will Basin Electric continue to comply with the Commission's 2009 Order and the**
26 **associated Certification Relating to Order Provisions previously executed for the**
27 **Existing Project?**

28 A. Yes. Basin Electric will continue to comply with the requirements set forth in the
29 Commission's 2009 Order and Certification Relating to Order Provisions executed by
30 Basin Electric for the Existing Project. *See* Case No. PU-08-075, Dkt. No. 20.

1 **Q31. Will the Upgrade Project's location and operation produce minimal adverse effects**
2 **on the environment and on the citizens of North Dakota?**

3 A. Yes. The Upgrade Project has been sited to comply with Ward County zoning regulations
4 and the Commission's siting criteria. The Upgrade Project minimizes potential impacts to
5 existing land uses, infrastructure, and environmental resources through its design and
6 utilization of existing infrastructure and infrastructure locations. Additionally, the Upgrade
7 Project will provide benefits to the local community and the state. For these reasons, and
8 as demonstrated through the Certification, Application, supporting filings, and my
9 testimony, the Upgrade Project will produce minimal adverse effects.

10 **Q32. Does this conclude your testimony?**

11 A. Yes.