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SCOPING AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING  
JANUARY 5, 2021 - 20-269, 20-384  
BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
AND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

In the Matter of the Applications of Walleye Wind, LLC  
for a Certificate of Need and Site Permit for the Walleye  
Wind Project and Associated Facilities in Rock County

MPUC DOCKET NO. IP7026/CN-20-269  
IP7026/WS-20-384

Met telephonically, pursuant to Notice,  
at 6:00 p.m. in the evening on January 5, 2021.

COURT REPORTER: Bridget E. Kelly

	I N D E X	
	SPEAKER	PAGE
1		
2		
3	Michael Kaluzniak	3
4	Suzanne Steinhauer	11
5	Mike Weich	18
6	Lucas Franco	24
7	Celem Ozuna	27
8	Dan McGowan	28
9	Julie Kindt	28
10	Jim Nichols	31
11	Bruce Carlson	32
12	Tara Kroger	37
13	Nathan Runke	38
14	Debbie Willard	38
15	Gary Overgaard	48
16	Cory Krueger	49
17	Peter Bakken	50
18	Jim Nichols	52
19	Brian Rockers	54
20	Jane Lanphere	54
21	Tara Kroger	56
22	Gary Papik	57
23		
24		
25		

1 OPERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, for  
2 those who are just joining, hello and welcome to the  
3 Walleye Wind public information and scoping meeting.  
4 If you would like to provide testimony during one of  
5 the public hearings, simply press star then the  
6 number 1 on your telephone keypad during the item on  
7 the agenda. If you would like to withdraw the  
8 commenting, please press the pound key. Thank you.

9 I will now turn the call over to Michael  
10 Kaluzniak. Sir, please go ahead.

11 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: Thank you. Good  
12 evening, everybody. My name is Michael Kaluzniak.  
13 Thank you for coming out to the public information  
14 and environmental report scoping meeting for the  
15 Walleye Wind project in Rock County. I'm a staff  
16 person with the energy facilities unit in the  
17 Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

18 The Commission itself is a public agency  
19 comprised of five commissioners and approximately 50  
20 staff members. We're charged with regulating  
21 utilities, electricity, gas, natural gas,  
22 telecommunications service in Minnesota. The PUC  
23 also authorizes construction and operation of large  
24 energy facilities, such as the one that we'll be  
25 talking about here tonight. Our mission is to

1 ensure that Minnesotans continue to receive safe,  
2 reliable, and affordable energy and  
3 telecommunications service and to allow the  
4 development of important infrastructure.

5 I know that during the pandemic the  
6 Commission is conducting these meetings remotely to  
7 help limit the spread of COVID-19 and safely allow  
8 members of the public to learn more about the  
9 project and provide feedback regarding potential  
10 impacts to the project and things we should  
11 consider. We value your feedback and encourage you  
12 to participate by providing your comments here  
13 tonight. You can also provide them in writing, and  
14 I'll talk a bit about this later, as well as through  
15 other sources as well, e-mails or whatever you like.

16 We are here to provide you information  
17 about the proposed project and the state's  
18 permitting process used for certificates of need and  
19 site permits for wind farms in Minnesota. The  
20 meeting's also an opportunity again to get your  
21 participation. We'd like to hear from you in the  
22 development of the project and the scoping of the  
23 environmental report and the draft site permit by  
24 providing comments on potential impacts associated  
25 with the project and potential mitigation measures

1 of those impacts, possible conditions that we might  
2 put within the site permit should it be approved.

3 The slide presentation for tonight's  
4 meeting is available online at the PUC's website,  
5 mn.gov, G-O-V, forward slash PUC. You can refer to  
6 that notice as well that we distributed on our  
7 website for information on how to connect and obtain  
8 this information. If you have any questions or  
9 difficulties connecting, you can speak with  
10 Mr. Charley Bruce, our public advisor for the staff,  
11 by speaking with an operator. Again, we appreciate  
12 your participation and patience with this.

13 With that I'm going to run through our  
14 slides here. Again, this will be the meeting  
15 agenda. We'll do introductions and the permit  
16 application review process. That'll be my talk.  
17 Suzanne Steinhauer from the Department of Commerce  
18 Energy Environmental Review and Analysis unit will  
19 talk about the environmental review requirements for  
20 the project. Third, we'll have a description of the  
21 proposed project and some details about next year  
22 and Walleye Wind. And finally, turning to you for  
23 questions and answers about the project and any  
24 input you might have.

25 I think I ran over the general mission of

1 the Public Utilities Commission. Again, we are  
2 independent. We try to be professional and  
3 transparent in our operations, and we try to include  
4 the public as much as we can in our decisions and  
5 hope you do participate.

6 Just briefly, the proposed Walleye Wind  
7 project is a 109-megawatt large wind energy  
8 conversion system, is what we call them in our  
9 regulations and rules. Wind farms is fine too.  
10 Windmills -- anyway because the project's capacity  
11 is greater than 50 megawatts, it's defined as a  
12 large energy facility. It requires a certificate of  
13 need and a site permit from the Commission before it  
14 can be sited or constructed. The Commission  
15 authorized review of the certificate of need  
16 informally to a comment and reply process, and we'll  
17 talk a bit about that later.

18 This slide shows the site permit review  
19 process. Again, as a reminder there are two  
20 processes. There are two permits that must -- two  
21 approvals that the Commission must provide in order  
22 to construct and operate the project. The first  
23 approval is a certificate of need, and the  
24 certificate of need demonstrates the size, type, and  
25 timing and of course the need for the project in

1 terms of its electrical system. Again, that is the  
2 main reason that we would have an environmental  
3 report. In this case the site permit itself is  
4 obviously related to the location, choosing the  
5 locations for the project itself and establishing  
6 permit conditions to ensure that we are operating as  
7 efficiently and safely as we can. It minimizes  
8 impacts.

9 The site permit review process is shown  
10 here, and I'm not going to spend a lot of time on  
11 it. But I would note a couple things here is that  
12 we're at the comment period on issues related to the  
13 draft site permit. We have until January 26 to  
14 accept your comments, and we can do that via phone  
15 or fax or e-mails or calls here tonight. We weigh  
16 them all equally. After that time the Commission  
17 will issue a draft site permit, and, well, we'll  
18 actually consider -- we'll have to review the whole  
19 project in advance in full as we do that. But if  
20 the Commission issues a draft site permit, we'll be  
21 back having another public comment period and a  
22 hearing with more input from the public, so you'll  
23 have another opportunity after tonight. But we do  
24 want to get your comments as early as possible in  
25 order to ensure that they're considered properly

1 before a decision is made. At the public hearing,  
2 there will be an administrative law judge who will  
3 write a report about the entire proceeding including  
4 all of the records that we've developed, your  
5 comments, and the application and the filings that  
6 are made to the docket, so before it is sent to the  
7 Commission for its decision.

8 This next slide shows the combined  
9 certificate of need and site permit review process.  
10 Basically, these orange boxes that I've added here  
11 demonstrate how this fits into those two processes  
12 and how they kind of merge. We try to do these  
13 things together to avoid -- minimizing confusion and  
14 things like that people may have. So we're at the  
15 comment stage of the certificate of need. That  
16 currently is an ongoing comment period. It will be  
17 going on for a while.

18 After the meeting Suzanne and the  
19 Department of Commerce will develop an environmental  
20 report related to the need questions primarily, and  
21 that report will be entered into the record for your  
22 review as well prior to the public hearing. Mr.  
23 Matthew Landi from the Department of Commerce, a  
24 separate unit, is also here. He's the analyst who  
25 will be working on reviewing the certificate of need



1 application and providing us some input on that on  
2 their behalf.

3 Here's a timeline of the process. The  
4 date the application was filed in July. We accepted  
5 the application at the Commission in October. That  
6 does not mean that the application was accepted and  
7 approved. It means that we accepted it because it  
8 had the information necessary to proceed. We're  
9 here today, January 5, 2021 for the public  
10 information and scoping meeting. The scoping piece  
11 is where we'd like to hear information from you on  
12 what should be in the environmental report. I have  
13 a typo on the next line, but it says environmental  
14 assessment -- it should be environmental report --  
15 issued April '21, estimated. For the hearing we'll  
16 probably be doing this again in May, and the  
17 administrative law judge will file a report within  
18 60 days of that time probably. That would be  
19 approximately July of 2021. And finally, the  
20 Commission's decision will be anticipated to be  
21 sometime close to September.

22 I won't run through these in great detail  
23 because I'm kind of running late here, but there's  
24 many things that we look at in terms of approving  
25 both the certificate of need and the site permits.

1 For example with need we consider adequacy,  
2 reliability, and efficiency of the energy supply  
3 system. We require documentation that it's needed  
4 and in the interest of the public. Compatibility  
5 with human health, natural resources, and  
6 socioeconomic environments. We consider reasonable  
7 and prudent alternatives. If there's a better  
8 alternative to the project, we can consider those.  
9 And finally, compatibility with relevant rules,  
10 policies, and regulations of other state, local, and  
11 federal governments. And then with the site permit  
12 where we're talking about where they go and how we  
13 minimize impacts, we want to conserve and minimize  
14 those impacts -- conserve resources, excuse me, and  
15 minimize impacts; minimize human settlement and  
16 other land use conflicts; and finally, ensure an  
17 efficient, cost-effective, secure supply and  
18 transmission infrastructure.

19 I've listed some additional information  
20 here. I'm not going to read through this because it  
21 is available in the notice itself. I ask if you  
22 have a question, just raise your hand. I would  
23 highlight the first line that talks about the  
24 Department of Commerce. They have a specific  
25 website for this project, and it's a really good

1 resource because it is very succinct. We also have  
2 an eDockets system that has each and every filing  
3 that we made to the docket, and that's probably got  
4 about a hundred pieces of information that you would  
5 have to read through. You're certainly welcome to  
6 do that. We encourage you to do that, and we  
7 provide you the information here on how to do that,  
8 and we'd be happy to answer any questions you have  
9 on that.

10 Finally, again, Mr. Charley Bruce is  
11 available. He's the public advisor, and I put his  
12 information there and my information as well should  
13 you have any questions.

14 And we do appreciate you being here.  
15 Thank you for your time. I'll turn it over to  
16 Suzanne Steinhauer. Thank you.

17 Suzanne, are you there?

18 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thanks, Mike.  
19 Good evening. Thanks for the -- I think you set it  
20 up really nicely.

21 My name is Suzanne Steinhauer. I'm with  
22 the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Energy  
23 Environmental Review and Analysis, and I will try to  
24 real quickly go through our role in the process and  
25 the environmental review in hopes that it's not

1 confusing, but it gives you some sort of context for  
2 how you can participate in the process.

3 Hit the next slide, please, Mike. Mike?

4 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: Oh, I'm sorry.

5 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Mike, can you  
6 hit the next slide?

7 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: Certainly.

8 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Yes, the  
9 Department of Commerce does a lot of things. And  
10 the thing that's related to the purpose of tonight's  
11 meeting, the proposed project, the energy  
12 environmental review and analysis division of which  
13 I'm a part acts as technical advisors to the  
14 Commission, particularly on large energy projects.  
15 We administer the environmental review process for  
16 large energy projects and with a goal of providing  
17 an objective analysis of the proposed projects and  
18 their potential human and environmental impacts.  
19 Any infrastructure project, including but not  
20 limited to energy projects, is going to have an  
21 impact, so our job is to identify those and explore  
22 them and try to develop some mitigation measures  
23 that decision-makers can consider in their ultimate  
24 decision. I do want to reiterate that EERA does not  
25 advocate for a particular outcome or on behalf of a

1 particular constituency. We try to focus on making  
2 sure that the facts are available to the Commission,  
3 to any other agency having decision-making authority  
4 and to the public so that they can participate in an  
5 informed way.

6 Next slide, please.

7 I think we can skip through this 'cause I  
8 think Mike went through the difference of the two  
9 approval processes. So just real briefly, there are  
10 two processes, both requiring environmental review,  
11 but the way that they're structured are kind of  
12 different. For the CN proceeding, a separate  
13 environmental report is required, and so that's a  
14 discrete environmental review document. And for a  
15 site permit, there's not a discrete environmental  
16 review document. That review is incorporated into  
17 the process.

18 Next slide, please.

19 So the environmental report -- I think  
20 Mike referenced it nicely as being related to issues  
21 of the need for the project. It describes the  
22 proposed project and system alternatives. System  
23 alternatives is a regulatory term of art for looking  
24 at alternate methods to meet the proposed need --  
25 the need for the proposed project. So how would the

1 alternatives look different if that need were met in  
2 another way? The ER also then looks at potential  
3 human and environmental impact for the proposed  
4 project and alternatives and tries to identify  
5 strategies to avoid and mitigate those impacts.

6 Next slide, please.

7 So one of the purposes of the meeting  
8 here, in addition to trying to answer questions you  
9 may have about the project in the process, is to  
10 gather comments on the scope of the environmental  
11 report. The scoping focuses the environmental  
12 report on information that will assist  
13 decision-makers and the public. What potential  
14 human and environmental impacts should be studied?  
15 Are there other ways to meet the stated need, and  
16 are there any unique characteristics within the  
17 project area that should be considered that would  
18 help inform the analysis of the proposed project and  
19 the development of the site permit?

20 Next slide, please. Can you go one more?  
21 I misordered those. So can you go to the next,  
22 which should be environmental report contents?

23 So there is an -- on our website, the  
24 link to that is in the notice and also in the  
25 materials Mike provided earlier, there is an example

1 of an environmental report scoping decision, so the  
2 draft for this project. It does not include the  
3 information that we receive tonight on comments.  
4 But the environmental report will do a couple  
5 things. It will look at alternatives to the  
6 proposed project and then system alternatives. It  
7 will look at a similar-size solar project, a generic  
8 wind project, and then also a no-build alternative.  
9 For the proposed project and for each of the  
10 alternatives, it will explore impact mitigations  
11 related to air quality; water resources; solid and  
12 hazardous wastes, natural resources including  
13 impacts to wildlife, vegetation, unique natural  
14 resources; human impacts, noise, visual impact,  
15 shadow flicker, turbine lighting; community impacts,  
16 impacts to local economies, taxes, and  
17 transportation infrastructure; public health and  
18 safety; agricultural impacts; required electric  
19 transmission; and then the availability and  
20 feasibility of the alternatives.

21 There are a couple of things that the  
22 environmental report won't cover. It won't look at  
23 details, locational information on the location of  
24 particular turbines, roads, or collector lines.  
25 That's something that the siting process in the

1 development of the draft site permit will look at.  
2 It will not look at negotiation and content of the  
3 easement agreements. That's outside the  
4 Commission's purview. And it will not look at  
5 alternatives not specifically addressed in the  
6 scoping decision.

7 So can we go back one slide to -- yeah.

8 So the environmental review for the site  
9 permit is, as I mentioned earlier, incorporated into  
10 the process. The application, the development of  
11 the draft site permit, and then finally the public  
12 hearing presided over by the administrative law  
13 judge then informs the final site permit.

14 Forward probably two slides, I think.  
15 Yeah. Thank you.

16 The application that was originally  
17 submitted in July and then updated with a revised  
18 layout describes the proposed project and potential  
19 impacts. It describes potential strategies to  
20 minimize, avoid, or mitigate those potential impacts  
21 and identifies unavoidable adverse impacts.

22 Next page, please.

23 So taking the general information on the  
24 project from the application, the next step is the  
25 development of a draft site permit. Commission



1 staff is provided a sample site permit because site  
2 permits tend to be pretty similar between the  
3 projects with special conditions depending on the  
4 characteristics of a particular project. And over  
5 time many of these special conditions become  
6 standard conditions. For example avian-bat  
7 protection plans are now required for all projects  
8 as are labor -- quarterly labor reports. And they  
9 tend to be -- to get incorporated into general  
10 permit conditions. So the draft site permit is  
11 informed by what issues should be considered. Are  
12 there unique characteristics of the proposed site or  
13 project that should be considered? Are there items  
14 that are missing or mischaracterized in the site  
15 permit application? Those help inform our  
16 development of the draft site permit for the  
17 Commission's consideration.

18 Next page, please.

19 So real quickly -- and we'll come back to  
20 this after Walleye has had an opportunity to present  
21 information on their project -- what we're looking  
22 for tonight, we'll try to answer questions you may  
23 have about the process or the project. What we're  
24 also looking for are comments on potential impacts  
25 that may be from the project, human or environmental

1 impacts; strategies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate  
2 those potential impacts; other ways to meet the  
3 stated need for the project; characteristics that  
4 are unique to the proposed site for the project;  
5 items that are missing or mischaracterized in either  
6 of the applications; and any other sort of general  
7 project-related issues or concerns.

8 Next slide.

9 As Mike mentioned tonight is the only  
10 time we can take the verbal comments. We'll open  
11 that up real soon, and -- but written comments need  
12 to be to us by the end of the day on Tuesday,  
13 January 26th. There's a couple of different ways  
14 you can get to that.

15 I think we can skip ahead then to the  
16 Walleye presentation. Thank you.

17 MR. MIKE WEICH: Thank you, Suzanne.  
18 This is Mike Weich now on the line. Is it good to  
19 proceed, Mike?

20 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: You're good to  
21 go. Thanks.

22 MR. MIKE WEICH: Appreciate it. So my  
23 name is Mike Weich. I'm the developer of the  
24 Walleye Wind project. I really appreciate the  
25 opportunity to go over the project tonight at the

1 public information and environmental reporting  
2 scoping meeting.

3 Mike, if you'll go to the next slide.

4 Our discussion on the project will be  
5 brief this evening. We want to give you an overview  
6 of who we are; give you an overview of the project,  
7 the timeline; discuss the benefits of the project,  
8 review our stakeholder outreach thus far; provide a  
9 quick map of the site plan for you to witness, and  
10 obviously there will be more distributed in the  
11 docket following this meeting. We'll go over our  
12 decommissioning plan, our construction plan, and  
13 then provide some additional contact information for  
14 you guys to take back with you after tonight's  
15 discussion.

16 So first, if we can go to the next slide,  
17 an applicant overview.

18 The Walleye Wind project is owned by the  
19 Walleye Wind, LLC. We are a wholly-owned indirect  
20 subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources. NextEra  
21 Energy Resources is the world's largest generator of  
22 renewable energy from the wind and the sun.

23 Generation from the Walleye Wind project will be  
24 sold to Minnesota Municipal Power Agency through a  
25 long-term power purchase agreement that we have

1           executed with them.

2                       Go to the next slide, Mike.

3           The project, as it is proposed, will be  
4           located entirely in Rock County, Minnesota. The  
5           wind project will be owned and operated by NextEra  
6           Energy Resources. It was originally owned by RES,  
7           and there was actually 11 megawatts of this  
8           interconnection that was a part of a seven-turbine  
9           operating asset owned by RES Renewables. We  
10          acquired the Walleye Wind, LLC, from them in 2019.  
11          As we continue to develop this asset, the new site  
12          will be owned and operated by NextEra Energy  
13          Resources. Walleye Wind has executed, as we  
14          mentioned previously, a PPA with Minnesota Municipal  
15          Power Agency. This project is needed to provide  
16          electricity in support of MMPA's members in their  
17          further efforts to exceed Minnesota's clean energy  
18          requirements. The project will consist of 36 GE  
19          2.82 megawatt turbines and four GE 2.3 megawatt  
20          turbines. In total 40 turbines will consist of the  
21          site.

22                       Go forward, Mike.

23          The project will provide up to 200  
24          temporary construction job opportunities through the  
25          construction activities of the project. That

1 construction timeline should increase local  
2 business. We should see increases in hotel usage,  
3 dining, and other places that conduct general  
4 business during the construction of the project. It  
5 will consist of annual ongoing compensation for  
6 participating landowners in the project, and it will  
7 be playing an integral role in the delivery of clean  
8 energy to ensure that future benefits are tied to  
9 the wind farm in the State of Minnesota for their  
10 energy goals.

11 Go forward, Mike.

12 Walleye Wind has conducted stakeholder  
13 outreach. We've been focused on advertising,  
14 educating, and consulting with landowners and the  
15 community members. Our outreach has involved  
16 communication with those landowners, and we've  
17 actually communicated with local tribes as well  
18 through our tribal relations team, wildlife agencies  
19 through our environmental team, and government  
20 officials in Rock County. We've listed here some of  
21 the organizations that we've specifically targeted  
22 in our coordination and collaboration. There are  
23 obviously numerous not even listed on this list that  
24 we've collaborated with and communicated with as  
25 part of our stakeholder outreach since we took over

1 the project and began development in 2019.

2 As we move forward, here's the project  
3 site plan. This will match the site plan as  
4 presented in our docket that can be accessed via the  
5 website in the docket online to take another look.

6 Now I'll provide, on the next slide, a  
7 construction overview. Assuming the Public  
8 Utilities Commission grants the site permit, in the  
9 summer of the 2021, we'll begin constructing the  
10 project. We'll begin by removing any trees, brush,  
11 or other low-growing vegetation that is within the  
12 project area and within the construction easement of  
13 the project area along construction and maintenance  
14 travel paths for the construction materials and  
15 equipment. Temporary laydown areas will be staged  
16 within the project boundary to facilitate material  
17 deliveries and house contractors' vehicles and  
18 equipment to be used on the project. Turbine  
19 foundations will then require excavating a hole  
20 approximately 8 to 10 feet in depth and  
21 approximately 50 to 55 feet in diameter. We'll then  
22 construct or modify any permanent access roads for  
23 each individual permanent turbine, and then  
24 disturbed areas following construction activities  
25 will be restored and reclaimed inclusive of debris,

1 including the removal, disposal, dismantling of all  
2 temporary facilities and controlling erosion. So  
3 our work even after the project is completed, in  
4 terms of construction, will continue with  
5 reclamation activities.

6 And then finally, on the last slide, here  
7 is my contact information. As the developer for  
8 Walleye Wind, LLC, you can e-mail me directly with  
9 questions. We also have provided a couple links to  
10 the PUC website and at mn.gov where the docket can  
11 be found with more information.

12 And with that, that concludes our portion  
13 of the presentation, and I'll turn it back over to  
14 Suzanne and Mike.

15 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Okay. Thanks,  
16 Mike. Mike Kaluzniak, if you could go back a couple  
17 of slides to the one that says comments tonight.  
18 Yep. Thank you.

19 Again, this is Suzanne Steinhauer from  
20 the Minnesota Department of Commerce. I do want to  
21 give our thanks to you tonight for coming out and  
22 also thanks to the court reporter that we have  
23 online, Bridget Kelly. She'll be taking the  
24 comments tonight. There will be a record of the  
25 meeting that will be available for people to look

1 at, I think, generally following the close of  
2 comments. So just a couple of ground rules. I  
3 think a lot of this is taken care of because of the  
4 way that the Webex is set up, but just one speaker  
5 at a time. And for the benefit of the record and  
6 the court reporter, if you could begin by stating  
7 and spelling your name. And please limit your  
8 initial comments to five minutes. We will try to --  
9 we're here for a while tonight, but I'd like to make  
10 sure that everybody has an opportunity to at least  
11 provide their initial comments or questions.

12 So I'll turn it over to the operator. If  
13 you -- is there anyone who has expressed an interest  
14 in commenting or asking questions?

15 OPERATOR: Certainly, ma'am. Ladies and  
16 gentlemen, if you wish to make a comment or to ask a  
17 question, simply press star 1 on your telephone.  
18 And if you would like to withdraw from commenting,  
19 press the pound key. Thank you.

20 Your first comment or question comes from  
21 the line of Lucas. Please go ahead and ask your  
22 question.

23 MR. LUCAS FRANCO: Yeah, good evening.  
24 My name is Lucas Franco, L-U-C-A-S, F-R-A-N-C-O.  
25 I'm the research manager for the Laborers' Union of



1 Minnesota and North Dakota. We represent about  
2 12,000 construction workers in Minnesota including  
3 many in southwest Minnesota. And I'm just calling  
4 to express my support for the Walleye Wind Farm  
5 project. This project will contribute tens of  
6 millions of dollars in economic activity to  
7 southwestern Minnesota at a time when Minnesota  
8 workers really desperately need new economic  
9 opportunities.

10 As folks know the COVID-19 global  
11 pandemic has devastated Minnesota's economy.  
12 There's definitely hope on the horizon in terms of  
13 widespread distribution of a vaccine, but we've  
14 still got a long ways to go to recover. And we  
15 really need new economic investment, and this  
16 project really fits that bill. The statewide  
17 unemployment rate is still nearly twice what it was  
18 in March 2020, 4.6 percent in October 2020 compared  
19 to 2.9 percent in March 2020, so we've got a long  
20 ways to go. Construction economy was relatively  
21 stable during the early months of the pandemic,  
22 which helped inject a lot of money into the state  
23 unemployment insurance programs, and so many  
24 construction workers were working. But a lot of  
25 that work has subsided, and the pipeline is

1 relatively dried up. So new investments in clean  
2 energy projects like the Walleye Wind Farm will  
3 create good family-supporting jobs for Minnesota  
4 workers and help create a pathway out of our ongoing  
5 economic crisis. In particular this project will  
6 create about a hundred full-time equivalent  
7 family-supporting construction jobs and of course  
8 generate millions in both landowner payments and tax  
9 revenue.

10 The project will have a particularly  
11 positive impact in the region and maximize positive  
12 socioeconomic impacts because the developer NextEra  
13 has indicated the company's commitment to work with  
14 labor unions to recruit and utilize skilled local  
15 workers, and this is really an important point in  
16 terms of weighing the relative human impacts and the  
17 steps this project has taken to maximize local  
18 benefits. For construction workers a project like  
19 the Walleye Wind Farm is really more than just a job  
20 if you mean having enough for a down payment on a  
21 house or enough to start working on a two- or  
22 four-year degree. And perhaps most importantly,  
23 investments like Walleye Wind provide vital economic  
24 stimulus to our state and create new opportunities  
25 and ultimately help Minnesota climb out of the

1 depths of the economic crisis that we've found  
2 ourselves in.

3 The Walleye Wind Farm project couldn't  
4 come at a better time for Minnesota. Our members  
5 look forward to getting work building this project,  
6 and I really appreciate everyone's time this evening  
7 and the steps that public agencies have taken to  
8 adapt to this challenging time. So thank you for  
9 your time.

10 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you,  
11 Mr. Franco, for the comment. Is there anyone else  
12 who'd like to take the opportunity to comment or ask  
13 a question?

14 OPERATOR: Yes, ma'am. Your next  
15 question or comment comes from the line of Celem  
16 Ozuna. Celem, please go ahead and ask your question  
17 or comment.

18 MS. CELEM OZUNA: Hello. My name is  
19 Celem Ozuna, C-E-L-E-M, Ozuna, O-Z-U-N-A. And I was  
20 calling 'cause I'm part of the Local 563 Laborers'  
21 Union. And with this project, not only will it help  
22 -- you know, help the Laborers' Union workers, but  
23 it's also gonna help out family with -- you know,  
24 with so many -- with this pandemic that's been going  
25 on, it has -- we haven't really had much work, and

1 with this it's gonna help, you know, not just us  
2 Laborers' Union. It's also gonna help the state,  
3 and I -- I think we should do this. Thank you.

4 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you. Is  
5 there anybody else in the queue?

6 OPERATOR: Yes, ma'am. Next on the line  
7 comes from the line of Dan McGowan. Please go  
8 ahead. Your line is now open.

9 MR. DAN MCGOWAN: Hi. My name Dan  
10 McGowan, M-C-G-O-W-A-N. I'm an organizer with the  
11 Laborers' Union. And due to my job, I regularly  
12 work in southern Minnesota, whether it's meeting  
13 with workers or meeting with contractors and many  
14 times working with school districts on helping pass  
15 referendums. But the one thing that comes out with  
16 everything that's very clear is the need for jobs,  
17 and so I'm calling in support of this project.  
18 Thank you.

19 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

20 OPERATOR: Next in line comes from the  
21 line of Julie Kindt. Julie, please ask your  
22 question or state your comment.

23 MS. JULIE KINDT: Hi. Good evening.  
24 Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on  
25 this topic. My name is Julie Kindt. I'm from

1 Delavan, Minnesota, and I'm a union laborer with  
2 local 563 out of Mankato. And I have had the  
3 privilege of working on a wind project in western  
4 Minnesota for the last two years, and this job has  
5 provided me with a great income and benefits and  
6 many other things too good to mention. But it also  
7 pumps money into the rural part of Minnesota where  
8 so many of these small towns are struggling. And  
9 Rock County, I grew up there. I didn't realize this  
10 project was going up there until tonight. But I  
11 strongly encourage you to approve this wind project  
12 to get so many Minnesotans back to work and to  
13 provide rural Minnesota economic growth, especially  
14 now in the time of need of jobs. Thank you. Have a  
15 good night.

16 COURT REPORTER: Julie, can you spell  
17 your last name?

18 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thanks. That's  
19 exactly what I was going to ask, and I'm sorry, I  
20 should've asked that earlier. Is Julie still on the  
21 line?

22 MS. JULIE KINDT: Yeah, I am.

23 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Could you please  
24 spell your name for the court reporter?

25 MS. JULIE KINDT: K-I-N, as in Nancy, D,

1 as in David, T, as in Tom.

2 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Okay. Thank  
3 you.

4 MS. JULIE KINDT: You're welcome.

5 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I'm sorry to  
6 interrupt you.

7 MS. JULIE KINDT: Oh, no, that's fine.

8 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: We just need to  
9 make sure we have a good record.

10 MS. JULIE KINDT: All right. So should I  
11 stay on the line now or do I hang up?

12 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I think if that  
13 was your comment, I think you can hang up, and if  
14 you have something else to say later on, we can get  
15 back to you.

16 MS. JULIE KINDT: No, that's fine. I  
17 want to listen to more comments.

18 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Okay. Thank  
19 you.

20 MS. JULIE KINDT: Thanks.

21 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: So again, I  
22 should -- I'm sorry, I lapsed there. So if I can  
23 reiterate, if you could please just take the time to  
24 spell your name so we have a good record and I don't  
25 have to interrupt later. Thank you.

1 OPERATOR: So next on the line comes from  
2 the line of Jim Nichols. Please go ahead. Your  
3 line is now open.

4 MR. JIM NICHOLS: Thank you. Can you  
5 hear me?

6 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: We can. Thank  
7 you.

8 MR. JIM NICHOLS: I'm Jim Nichols. I  
9 have farmed at Lake Benton, Minnesota all my life.  
10 And we have a big wind turbine on my farm, and it's  
11 been very successful without any problems. And I  
12 did serve two terms as a state senator and two terms  
13 as ag commissioner. And one of the things that I  
14 believe we have as a future as farmers is renewable  
15 energy both in ethanol and in wind. And I want to  
16 commend the City of Luverne and Rock County and  
17 local landowners, especially Dave Kolsrud, for the  
18 progress you've made, everything you've accomplished  
19 for your county and state there on renewable energy.

20 We -- when we passed our law -- and I had  
21 worked very hard in '91 to pass it, finishing my  
22 eight years as ag commissioner. Passed our ethanol  
23 law in 1991. It was then adopted by congress in  
24 2007, and now we produce 15 billion gallons of fuel  
25 and deliver 5.6 billion bushels of corn to our

1 ethanol plants. It's been a great market for us.  
2 It's the biggest single market that we have. With  
3 wind energy we produce thousands of megawatts of  
4 electricity, and we deliver them at the speed of  
5 light to our customers in the Twin Cities and even  
6 further away than that.

7 Wind has been a great thing. Every wind  
8 turbine, the big ones built now deliver more energy  
9 than an oil well. So if you put up a wind turbine,  
10 you have struck oil. And it's totally clean energy  
11 and delivered at the speed of light. Farmers --  
12 it's been good for our farmers in Lincoln County.  
13 The State of Minnesota, now we receive about  
14 \$15 million each year in annual rent payments as  
15 farmers for the wind turbines on our farms, and we  
16 receive about \$15 million in property taxes to our  
17 counties and townships. So it's been a great  
18 success for us as a county and a great thing for  
19 Lincoln County and a great thing for farmers. Thank  
20 you.

21 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

22 OPERATOR: Next is from the line of Bruce  
23 Carlson. Bruce, please go ahead.

24 MR. BRUCE CARLSON: Yeah, this is Bruce  
25 Carlson, B-R-U-C-E, C-A-R-L-S-O-N. My question



1 comes from -- I'm a South Dakota producer, and I own  
2 land right on the state line. There have been  
3 turbines that -- they are proposed to go up within a  
4 half mile or so of our -- or less than a half mile  
5 from the state line. As a South Dakota producer,  
6 and I've talked to a few neighbors, we have not  
7 heard of anything about this wind project until just  
8 recently and wondering why that is so, because it  
9 does affect us too.

10 And as the project is right now, there  
11 are many turbines from previous -- from the past  
12 that have been put up, and they have not been  
13 turning. And they are east of Highway 23. My  
14 question is: Why aren't we using those transmission  
15 lines over there? It seems like it'd be a huge cost  
16 savings. And maybe by not, you know, moving them  
17 over, maybe you could appease a little bit of the  
18 border of South Dakota here. I guess that would be  
19 my question. Why weren't -- why isn't -- aren't we  
20 notified a little bit more? Thank you.

21 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you. This  
22 is Suzanne Steinhauer. I can try to answer, to the  
23 extent that I can, the issue of notification. And  
24 then I'll see if Walleye Wind wants to talk about  
25 how they developed the project and sited those

1 turbines.

2 So there are requirements to notify  
3 people in the project area, and we do that by -- the  
4 applicant identifies landowners within and adjacent  
5 to the project area. It sounds like in this case  
6 maybe there are landowners in South Dakota that -- I  
7 don't know how we've done that, to be honest, in  
8 previous in other projects. And then provided the  
9 notice in the local paper and then on our website.  
10 So I would encourage you to sign up for the project  
11 mailing list, and if you want to give -- contact  
12 either me or Charley Bruce, and we can make sure  
13 that your name gets on the project mailing list for  
14 future projects.

15 MR. BRUCE CARLSON: And how do I contact  
16 you?

17 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I'm sorry?  
18 Pardon?

19 MR. BRUCE CARLSON: And how do I contact  
20 you?

21 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: You can contact  
22 me -- probably the best thing right now is by  
23 e-mail. Did you get a notice? Do you have access  
24 to the notice for the project? Or I can just give  
25 you my e-mail address, which is Suzanne, S-U -- if

1           you want to take it down now?

2                   MR. BRUCE CARLSON:    Sure, yep.

3                   MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER:    Sure.  It's  
4           Suzanne, S-U-Z-A-N-N-E, dot Steinhauer,  
5           S-T-E-I-N-H-A-U-E-R, at state dot Minnesota dot US.

6                   MR. BRUCE CARLSON:    Okay.  Thank you.

7                   MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER:    And I can make  
8           sure that you're on the project mailing list to  
9           receive notification of future milestones in the  
10          project and future meetings.  And then I don't know  
11          if anybody from Walleye wanted to talk about the  
12          turbines that are there but not turning or why --  
13          how you located the individual turbines.

14                   MR. MIKE WEICH:    Yep, Suzanne, this is  
15          Mike Weich, the developer of Walleye Wind, M-I-K-E,  
16          last name, W-E-I-C-H.  I have the answer, if that's  
17          okay.

18                   MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER:    Yep.

19                   MR. MIKE WEICH:    As far as our practices,  
20          sir, for siting turbines, in addition to a wind  
21          resource assessment where we assess the most  
22          favorable areas where the wind is most prevalent in  
23          siting our turbines, we also look to comply with all  
24          of Minnesota's state setback requirements,  
25          environmental requirements.  And then lastly, of

1 course we need willing landowners who want to enter  
2 into lease agreements with us and also surrounding  
3 landowners who want to enter into participation  
4 agreements with us. So a combination of assessing  
5 the wind, making sure the turbines are sited  
6 responsibly, and finding landowners that are willing  
7 to receive these turbines is what's drove the  
8 location of our wind farm turbines.

9 As far as the turbines you're referencing  
10 that are not currently spinning, I believe you might  
11 be referencing seven turbines that were formerly  
12 known as MN Wind or Perch. That was in the  
13 presentation. I mentioned that briefly at the top  
14 of the presentation. Those were seven turbines  
15 previously owned by RES Renewables, the prior owner  
16 of the project. Those turbines amounted to  
17 approximately 11 megawatts.

18 We own those turbines, and we have  
19 prepped those turbines to be part of the new project  
20 and subsequently shut them down. They are not  
21 generating electricity currently. They will be  
22 decommissioned as part of the construction  
23 activities of the new Walleye Wind project, and that  
24 area in that vicinity of those seven turbines will  
25 become part of the new 40-turbine site that will

1           become Walleye Wind.

2                       So in terms of what you stated, sir, we  
3 will be utilizing the general vicinity of that area  
4 as part of our new project.

5           MR. BRUCE CARLSON:   Okay.  Are they to be  
6 much taller than the ones that are presently there?

7           MR. MIKE WEICH:   They will be taller,  
8 sir.  I couldn't give you the exact amount off the  
9 top of my head, but they will taller turbines and  
10 newer turbines.

11          MR. BRUCE CARLSON:   Okay.  Thank you.

12          MR. MIKE WEICH:   Yes, sir.

13          OPERATOR:   Next line is the line of Tara  
14 Kroger.  Please go ahead.  Your line is now open.

15          MS. TARA KROGER:   My name Tara Kroger,  
16 T-A-R-A, K-R-O-G-E-R.  And I'm from Local 563.  I've  
17 done wind turbines for four years, and we do things  
18 right.  All the trades work together like they  
19 should, and this job -- this project would be  
20 important to the economy and to jobs and bring money  
21 back to the area.  I think that it's a good thing  
22 considering all that's been going on, so I approve  
23 this project.  And thank you for your time and  
24 consideration.

25          MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER:   Thank you.

1 OPERATOR: Next one is from the line of  
2 Nathan Runke. Nathan, please go ahead.

3 MR. NATHAN RUNKE: Hi. My name is Nathan  
4 Runke. It's spelled N-A-T-H-A-N, and last name is  
5 R-U-N-K-E. I'm with Local 49, the Operating  
6 Engineers. We represent 14,000 members across  
7 Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. And I'd  
8 like to echo our brothers and sisters in Laborers'  
9 Union in a lot of statements they've made. We view  
10 these projects as a great opportunity for the  
11 skilled workforce we have in Minnesota and the  
12 Dakotas. They're a great resource -- a source of  
13 employment for those members and other -- other  
14 people from the state, and they're a great economic  
15 resource for us at this time. So we wanted to kind  
16 of echo their support of this project. And that was  
17 all I have, so thank you for your time.

18 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

19 OPERATOR: Next is from the line of  
20 Debbie Willard. Debbie, please go ahead.

21 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: Can you hear me?

22 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: We can. Thank  
23 you.

24 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: Okay. My name is  
25 Debbie Willard. It's D-E-B-B-I-E, W-I-L-L-A-R-D.

1           And we live about a half mile from the Minnesota  
2           border, so we're gonna be pretty close to the wind  
3           turbines. And you'll have to forgive me. I'm a  
4           little bit nervous. So anyways I'm kind of  
5           wondering -- I have children. I'm kind of wondering  
6           what -- what aspects of how safe the -- the -- I  
7           guess the -- I mean, you hear things about cell  
8           towers emitting waves. And are there any things  
9           about this that could affect my children or our  
10          health or our livestock's health, or has there been  
11          any known things to happen like that?

12                        MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you,  
13           Ms. Willard. This is Suzanne Steinhauer from the  
14           Department of Commerce.

15                        That is something that we study with all  
16           proposed energy projects. There are -- there have  
17           been large wind projects sited in Minnesota for over  
18           20 years, so there are occasional problems, you  
19           know, just as you would expect. What we see are --  
20           the limited number of issues are there are sometimes  
21           errors during the construction. With respect to  
22           operation, we are not seeing large issues with that.

23                        The location of particular turbines we're  
24           learning has to be sited to make sure that they  
25           don't interfere with communication equipment, so

1 that's something that we're learning. Another thing  
2 that people notice are the lights that are required  
3 for the tall structures. We continue to work with  
4 the Minnesota Department of Transportation and FAA  
5 to ensure that the structures are lit appropriately  
6 but in a way that would help minimize those impacts  
7 to local residents. There will be a project  
8 substation. That will be fenced. Those are  
9 typically the types of impacts that people are  
10 concerned -- and noise. I should say noise is  
11 something that people are concerned about. And they  
12 -- Walleye Wind has provided some information that  
13 we'll be vetting to ensure that noise that is  
14 perceived by nearby residents does not exceed the  
15 safe standards, so we'll be looking at that.

16 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: Does not exceed safe  
17 standards could mean we're still gonna hear it, but  
18 it's not gonna hurt our hearing kind of thing?

19 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Well, it  
20 definitely shouldn't be -- it definitely should not  
21 be hurting your hearing. That would be indicative  
22 of some sort of equipment malfunction. Typically,  
23 what we see is when the turbines are noisiest is  
24 often when there are weather events. So they are  
25 producing more noise, but it gets kind of melded



1 with the wind and other things that are going on.

2 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: Sure. Well, what I  
3 kind of meant by that was -- so we're gonna have to  
4 -- I'm a half mile away from where these are gonna  
5 be, so I'm gonna just -- I mean, that's why I'm  
6 asking you. I'm just gonna have to put up with it.  
7 I mean -- 'cause it's gonna make noise where I'm  
8 living. I can tell you that right now. So my --  
9 I'm not trying to be argumentative, but what I'm  
10 trying to get at is how much noise can we expect?  
11 How much vibration could come this way since we're a  
12 half mile away? What -- what -- how is this gonna  
13 impact, you know, the -- the stability of the area?

14 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Mm-hmm.

15 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: You know, looking at  
16 it from a landowner's point of view, you say that  
17 all this economic impact is going to be great for  
18 Minnesota. Well, how does that benefit us across  
19 the road in South Dakota?

20 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Mm-hmm.

21 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: How does it help  
22 South Dakota's taxes? You know, I know you'll say  
23 we're bringing workers in, and Sioux Falls is close.  
24 They'll be spending their money in Sioux Falls, this  
25 and that and the other thing. And Valley Springs is

1 our hometown. They'll be right there. There's not  
2 much there they could spend money on. So this is  
3 all benefitting Minnesota in my opinion, yet South  
4 Dakota has to put up with the sight of seeing this  
5 and dealing with all the problems that come along  
6 with it. So I guess that's what I'm concerned with.

7 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: So, yeah, I take  
8 your question, and I'm sorry that I don't -- I can't  
9 respond absolutely because I -- that information is  
10 in the application, and that's something that we  
11 have sent out to our -- to the state's noise  
12 consultant that we keep on retainer to see what  
13 those impacts might be. They do need to adhere to  
14 the Minnesota noise standards. But I think by the  
15 time we get back for the hearing, I can answer that  
16 question more specifically. I don't know if -- Mike  
17 or Michelle, if you have any additional information  
18 to provide from Walleye's perspective on the noise.  
19 I know that there are some turbines that you're  
20 proposing have some software that limits the  
21 operation in terms of the noise.

22 MR. MIKE WEICH: Yeah, Suzanne, if it's  
23 okay, we have our sound expert that did our  
24 evaluation on sound that can comment, Rich, on the  
25 line, if you can give them a moment to comment.

1 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Yeah. Thanks.

2 MR. MIKE WEICH: Go ahead, Rich.

3 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: If you could  
4 please identify yourself and spell your name,  
5 please.

6 MR. MIKE WEICH: You there, Rich?

7 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: I think you're  
8 on mute, perhaps.

9 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: Hello, Jurgan?

10 OPERATOR: Yes, sir?

11 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: Hi. This is Mike  
12 Kaluzniak. Is Rich on the speakers' line, perhaps?  
13 Has he contacted you? Or on the -- I'm sorry, the  
14 public commenting line.

15 OPERATOR: You mean Debbie Willard?

16 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: Yep, I'm here.

17 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: She's here. I  
18 think we're looking for Rich Lampeter.

19 OPERATOR: We don't have the line of  
20 Richard.

21 MR. MIKE WEICH: I just got an e-mail  
22 that he got disconnected, Suzanne. But if he  
23 rejoins in a moment, I'm happy to have him speak for  
24 a moment. But as you said the standards are pretty  
25 high in the State of Minnesota for sound

1 specifically. The State of Minnesota does hold us  
2 to very high standards that we, you know, provide a  
3 lot of information about in the docket, and that  
4 information, I think, provides a lot of in-depth  
5 data and clarity on the question at hand. So I  
6 think the docket will provide answers to the  
7 concern. And if Rich can join, he can maybe add a  
8 little more color to the depth of the science behind  
9 it.

10 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: So the docket is  
11 from when we have the hearing with that -- or when  
12 they have the hearing with the administrative judge?  
13 That docket will come out of that hearing? Is that  
14 what you're saying?

15 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: So this is --  
16 again, this is Suzanne Steinhauer from the  
17 Department of Commerce. Walleye Wind provided some  
18 information in their application. The state, in  
19 developing the environmental review, will vet that  
20 information and make sure that our consultant agrees  
21 with the conclusion that Walleye's reached. And so  
22 I will have it in my fingertips by the time we're  
23 back for the public hearing. I still will be able  
24 to answer what the anticipated noise will be.

25 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: Okay.

1 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: If you'd like to  
2 contact me with your location, you know, afterwards,  
3 if you want to send me an e-mail, I can try to look  
4 at that and give you some more information.

5 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: And I know my time's  
6 limited, but is there anyone that could address how  
7 this could help us as residents of South Dakota  
8 along the corridor where these wind turbines are?  
9 How is that -- after it's all built. It'll help  
10 during the building. Of course it'll help our tax  
11 -- you know, collect taxes for our small town and  
12 Brandon and Sioux Falls. But how -- how -- I mean,  
13 we're just kind of stuck looking at this stuff and  
14 not -- I mean, this is our time to have our say, but  
15 yet -- you know, it's -- it's -- it's kind of  
16 frustrating to know that that's just gonna be --  
17 it's probably going to be put up, and yet everything  
18 will benefit Minnesota.

19 MR. MIKE WEICH: Yes, ma'am. This is  
20 Mike Weich, the developer for Walleye Wind.  
21 M-I-K-E, W-E-I-C-H, Suzanne.

22 I appreciate your question, ma'am. You  
23 know, unfortunately, the organic nature of the  
24 design of the project is really specific to its  
25 point of interconnection. So where we had

1 interconnection accessibility happened to be in the  
2 State of Minnesota, so we tried to site our turbines  
3 as appropriately as possible, as close to that point  
4 of interconnection as possible. So the subsequent  
5 location of all the turbines in the site in  
6 Minnesota is a byproduct of the availability of the  
7 grid for the project.

8 There will be, as you have mentioned,  
9 positive impacts economically that do go over into  
10 South Dakota right on the border, just due to the  
11 mere nature of the up to 200 construction workers  
12 that will be in the area and the additional support  
13 that will be needed for the project that will come  
14 through those communities on the border. So, you  
15 know, the benefits will be seen economically in  
16 South Dakota as well as Minnesota. But to your  
17 point, by the mere nature organically of us siting  
18 the project responsibly, all the turbines in the  
19 project itself is located in the State of Minnesota.

20 MS. DEBBIE WILLARD: Okay. I do have one  
21 more question. I promise that's my last one. I  
22 heard somebody talk about landowner participation as  
23 far as -- I don't quite know what that was referring  
24 to as far as the wind project. But would we be  
25 allowed to -- to get -- I mean, somehow benefit,

1           like, from the energy?  Would our -- would our farms  
2           be able to benefit somehow by having those turbines  
3           so close where we're not paying such high energy  
4           costs through our cooperative?  I mean, is that  
5           something that you're referring to with landowner  
6           participation in the -- in the project or -- I guess  
7           I'm kind of dense when it comes to this stuff, so  
8           I'm probably not asking the right question.

9                       MR. MIKE WEICH:  No, ma'am, that's a --  
10           that's a great question.  This is Mike Weich again  
11           from Walleye Wind.  I'm happy to provide an answer  
12           and clarity on that question.  When I was mentioning  
13           landowner participation, I was merely referring to  
14           the landowners that are in the project area that are  
15           participating in the project.  They have coordinated  
16           with Walleye Wind and have easements for the project  
17           to house construction activities or infrastructure.  
18           That's what I meant by participation in regards to  
19           the project when I referred to landowner  
20           participation earlier.

21                      MS. DEBBIE WILLARD:  Oh, okay.  I thought  
22           it was just something maybe we could somehow benefit  
23           from as far as cheaper energy somehow or something  
24           for our farms.  Okay.  I understand now.  Sorry if  
25           that was a stupid question.  I better turn it over

1 so somebody else can talk. Thank you.

2 MR. MIKE WEICH: No problem, ma'am.  
3 Thank you for your questions. We appreciate it.

4 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you. And  
5 please, if you get a chance, just send me an e-mail,  
6 and I'd like to know more about where you're  
7 located. Thank you.

8 OPERATOR: Your next in line comes from  
9 the line of Gary Overgaard. Gary, please go ahead.

10 MR. GARY OVERGAARD: Yes, my name is Gary  
11 Overgaard, G-A-R-Y, O-V-E-R-G-A-A-R-D. I am a  
12 resident of Rock County. I guess I'll just be real  
13 quick. I believe that the project is gonna provide  
14 a beneficial economic impact and provide tax relief  
15 for the citizens of Rock County, and I would ask  
16 that the PUC approve the application of the Walleye  
17 Wind project. Short and sweet. Thank you for your  
18 time.

19 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you,  
20 Mr. Overgaard.

21 OPERATOR: There are no more further  
22 questions or comments in queue.

23 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Okay. I just  
24 want to give people another minute or two, if  
25 anybody comes up with anything. I do -- since we're



1 waiting I do want to reiterate that although tonight  
2 is the only time that we can take verbal comments,  
3 written comments, regardless of whether or not you  
4 participated tonight, are accepted through  
5 January 26th. There's some information here on the  
6 slide. There is more detailed information on the  
7 website that the Department of Commerce has set up  
8 for the project, which is in the notice, or you can  
9 just Google Walleye Wind, and that should be one of  
10 your first couple hits. So we can take comments by  
11 fax, by e-mail. There's an online comment form  
12 that's just a toggle button, and you can fill in  
13 there. So I do want to stress that, and then we  
14 need those by January 26th.

15 Are there -- is there anyone else in the  
16 line to comment, Jurgen?

17 OPERATOR: Yes, ma'am. Another follow-up  
18 from the line of Cory. Please go ahead.

19 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Okay.

20 OPERATOR: Your line is now open.

21 MR. CORY KRUEGER: Hello. I'm Cory  
22 Krueger, K-R-U-E-G-E-R, from Marshall, Minnesota. I  
23 am a laborer now with 24 years with Laborers Local  
24 563. I've been on a few other wind projects in the  
25 last few years, and I strongly support this project

1 for offering union workers that are skilled to put  
2 up these wind turbines. And being a landowner as  
3 well, it's very important to me that they get put up  
4 right. And being a worker I will benefit from the  
5 wages that are involved. So I strongly support this  
6 project. Thank you.

7 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

8 OPERATOR: Next is from the line of Peter  
9 Bakken. Peter, please go ahead.

10 MR. PETER BAKKEN: Hi. I'm Peter Bakken,  
11 P-E-T-E-R, B-A-K-K-E-N. And I'd like to thank the  
12 PUC and the Department of Commerce for giving us  
13 this opportunity to share our thoughts.

14 The hats that I wear are as a landowner  
15 and a 30-year elected supervisor of the Beaver Creek  
16 Township, which is predominantly the location of the  
17 towers. As a farmer this project diversifies my  
18 revenue in a way I couldn't successfully do on my  
19 own. As a township official, in the 30 years that  
20 I've been on the board, I've watched gravel go from  
21 \$4 a yard to \$9 a yard and a cost to replace  
22 culverts and bridges generally toting a five- to  
23 six-figure price tag now. My point being with all  
24 this, is it takes tax dollars to maintain  
25 infrastructure. Costs continue to increase as tax

1 bases stay static. Mainly ag and ag land in Rock  
2 County.

3 Back to my point on diversifying my  
4 business. NextEra is offering Rock County an  
5 opportunity to diversify the tax base with  
6 significant return to our local economy. A dollar  
7 in people's pocket generally gets spent on Main  
8 Street, new cars, and tractors. The concerns that  
9 we've had -- I've had and at the town board have all  
10 been answered. Some of those being what's this  
11 going to do for our roads; field disruption, in  
12 other words the ease of farming; the decommissioning  
13 provisions for the ones that are proposed to go up  
14 and the existing ones; and changes to our landscape.

15 The comment I do have on some tax relief  
16 and diversifying the tax base is all of these things  
17 that I've talked about here continue to cost money.  
18 And if we put all of those needed dollars on what  
19 we're currently doing, the taxes just continue to go  
20 up for landowners and surrounding people. With this  
21 opportunity to have the \$40-some million that are  
22 going to come into our economy, we can distribute  
23 some of that burden to the different areas of  
24 revenue with the windmills that are coming.

25 We've had successful answers to all of

1           these questions. I've felt comfortable with the  
2           answers. We've developed a sense of trust with the  
3           people that we've been working with, which in turn  
4           is creating a greater community acceptance of  
5           something we initially knew nothing about. As I was  
6           putting my thoughts together, my first thought when  
7           I was approached was with guarded skepticism, and as  
8           time has gone by, I am cautiously optimistic about  
9           the future of this project. I look forward to the  
10          economic impact this has to our community, and I  
11          support the NextEra project Walleye Wind in Rock  
12          County. Thank you.

13                   MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

14                   OPERATOR: Another comment or question  
15          from the line of Jim Nichols. Jim, please go ahead.

16                   MR. JIM NICHOLS: Thank you. I just  
17          heard a question about the sound. Can you hear me?

18                   MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Yes,  
19          Mr. Nichols.

20                   MR. JIM NICHOLS: Thank you. I'm the  
21          farmer from Lake Benton that's had the turbine on my  
22          farm for 15 years. We have about 300 wind turbines  
23          in Lincoln County, over 3,000 in the State of  
24          Minnesota. And I just want to say that noise just  
25          is not an issue. And I understand your concerns in

1 South Dakota 'cause, you know, you don't get any  
2 benefit there, but I've testified several times for  
3 projects in South Dakota that would do a lot for  
4 schools in the state.

5 My turbine is about 1500 feet, which is a  
6 quarter mile, from my home. And we can never hear  
7 the turbine in the home, never hear it. Standing  
8 out in the yard, you hear a gentle swishing sound.  
9 I've hosted dozens and dozens of tour groups and  
10 asked them to listen, and you just -- you can't hear  
11 the turbine. It's just not an issue. The other  
12 issue always becomes bird-kill. In the 15 years  
13 that I've farmed all the ground myself, I've never  
14 seen a bird killed. The lights, you know, I've had  
15 to live in a big city, and you have stoplights and  
16 streetlights and everything. Those little lights on  
17 the top of the turbines just never -- never bother  
18 us.

19 So I really don't see any negatives to  
20 the wind turbine. What I do like is it's very  
21 clean, very cheap power, and it will help our  
22 consumers in the cities. And we can deliver it at  
23 the speed of light from our farms to our customers.  
24 Thank you.

25 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

1 OPERATOR: Next is from the line of Brian  
2 Rockers. Brian, please go ahead.

3 MR. BRIAN ROCKERS: Yeah, this is Brian  
4 Rockers, R-O-C-K-E-R-S, from Owatonna, Minnesota.  
5 I'm a laborer in the Laborers' Union. And I support  
6 the project mainly for all the jobs that it will  
7 give and for tax reasons. Thank you.

8 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

9 OPERATOR: Next is from the line of Jane  
10 Lanphere. Jane, please go ahead.

11 MS. JANE LANPHERE: Hi. Jane Lanphere,  
12 J-A-N-E, L-A-N-P-H-E-R-E. I thank you for the  
13 opportunity to be here.

14 I'm the executive director of the Luverne  
15 Area Chamber and CVB. And we've had an opportunity  
16 to work with NextEra Energy for the last year and a  
17 half as they've come into the community and  
18 introduced themselves and provided ample -- many  
19 opportunities for us to learn about the project,  
20 about the potential of the project, and the economic  
21 -- economic and environmental benefit of this  
22 project, not only to Rock County in Minnesota but to  
23 the people in the United States. We have about 240  
24 members. And the chamber board and I recognize the  
25 extreme benefit.

1           You know, this is a once in a lifetime  
2           opportunity, a \$138 million investment in Rock  
3           County. The jobs it will produce during  
4           construction are going to be a huge benefit to our  
5           businesses that have been -- really suffered here in  
6           the corner of the state. Bounded by Iowa and South  
7           Dakota, we have seen our business slip over there as  
8           the pandemic has kept many of our businesses shut  
9           down. They are primed for an economic stimulus, and  
10          nothing could be better than having 200 workers here  
11          over -- you know, within the -- in the next year to  
12          support those businesses and revitalize those  
13          businesses. And then you look at the ongoing  
14          benefit of having 12 permanent workers here,  
15          employees with pay that they can spend and invest in  
16          this community. They can add a benefit to our  
17          schools.

18                 It's going to be a wonderful opportunity,  
19                 and the businesses are very anxious for this to --  
20                 the project to move forward. We have been working  
21                 with a young family that has been working on  
22                 actually establishing a campground and has been able  
23                 to secure financing because this is in the future,  
24                 and they -- they recognize that he would be able to  
25                 fill his campground. This was a huge benefit to us

1 on many, many levels.

2 And then you look at the tax benefits it  
3 has. The added tax from the wind turbines can  
4 supplant some of the expenses from the city and  
5 county and township tax, the school district tax  
6 base. We're gonna see some relief for homeowners  
7 and for agriculture. So it's really a beneficial  
8 project.

9 We know that they're good partners. They  
10 have certainly been involved in the community.  
11 We've seen their presence. They're available. They  
12 have an office on Main Street where people can come  
13 in and talk to them and have their questions  
14 answered. We're looking forward to the opportunity  
15 to work with them.

16 And so speaking for the chamber board, I  
17 urge you to swiftly approve this permit so we can go  
18 ahead and see, you know, economic development happen  
19 in Rock County. Thank you for your time.

20 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAEUER: Thank you.

21 OPERATOR: A follow-up from the line of  
22 Tara Kroger. Please, Tara, go ahead.

23 MS. TARA KROGER: Tara Kroger, T-A-R-A,  
24 Kroger, K-R-O-G-E-R. I wanted to comment about the  
25 gal that was worried about sound. I have been all



1 the way up to the top of those wind turbines working  
2 when the blades were going, and it was just like a  
3 breeze. The sound is not an issue, I promise. We  
4 are looking forward to hopefully seeing everyone and  
5 working and helping the economy. Thank you for your  
6 time and consideration.

7 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

8 OPERATOR: And we have the line of Gary  
9 Papik. Gary, please go ahead.

10 MR. GARY PAPIK: Yes, my name is Gary  
11 Papik, and my last name is spelled P-A-P-I-K. And I  
12 think that Jane, our chamber director, pretty much  
13 hit it right on the -- the nail on the head that  
14 this is gonna be great for our community, and it's  
15 something that we all need right now. I have a car  
16 dealership, and I'm also an investor in a lot of  
17 different projects in the community. And we need  
18 this help to kind of get things kind of moving in  
19 the right direction again, and any help you can get  
20 to get this thing passed, we'd greatly appreciate  
21 it. And thank you very much.

22 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you for  
23 your comment.

24 OPERATOR: There are no further comments  
25 or questions in queue. Please continue.

1 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Okay. So if  
2 there's nobody else on the line, I just want to  
3 reiterate we really appreciate your comments and  
4 your questions. We'll try to more fully develop  
5 that information. I want to appreciate -- express  
6 my appreciation for coming out tonight. Even though  
7 you don't have to drive on snowy roads, it's still  
8 time out of your day, and we really appreciate that.

9 And then as a follow-up, if you think of  
10 something later, we are taking written comments  
11 until the end of the day on January 26th, which is a  
12 Tuesday. I think that's three weeks from today.  
13 You can e-mail the comments to me, use an online  
14 comment form, fax comments, or mail comments. And  
15 that information is available on our website in the  
16 notice.

17 If there's nothing else, Mike, did you  
18 want to close things out?

19 MR. MICHAEL KALUZNIAK: Yes. Thank you,  
20 Suzanne. I appreciate it.

21 Thank you, everybody, for participating  
22 tonight. It means a lot to us, and we really,  
23 really appreciate you coming out and taking the  
24 time. I'd note that we had about 120 callers on  
25 today, so that's a pretty good turnout for a lot of

1 our projects, out in the rural areas at least.

2 Again, a reminder that comments are due  
3 on January 26th, Tuesday, at 4:30 p.m. Also as a  
4 follow-up, I'll just note that in the future we'll  
5 be seeing the environmental report issuance, as well  
6 as -- the Commission will consider the draft site  
7 permit issuance. And should they approve that draft  
8 site permit, we will be back out again -- I should  
9 say virtually out here and having another public  
10 hearing in this sense with an administrative law  
11 judge to consider the record further.

12 If you have any questions, please contact  
13 myself or Charley or Suzanne. And we're happy to  
14 talk with you anytime if you have questions and help  
15 you with it. Charley is our public advisor. He's  
16 the person who's assigned by the Commission to help  
17 people participate in the process. We can't give  
18 legal advice obviously, but we'd be happy to help  
19 you with those things if we could. Again, thank you  
20 all for coming out, and with that I'll just sign off  
21 and say thanks very much. Goodnight.

22 MS. SUZANNE STEINHAUER: Thank you.

23 OPERATOR: Thank you, presenters. Ladies  
24 and gentlemen, this ends today's conference call.  
25 Thank you for participating. You may now

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disconnect.

(Proceedings concluded at 7:18 p.m.)

1 STATE OF MINNESOTA )  
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I, Bridget E. Kelly, do hereby  
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Dated January 18, 2021.

/s/Bridget E. Kelly  
BRIDGET E. KELLY  
Court Reporter

<b>§</b>				
<b>\$138 (1)</b> 55:2	<b>16:5</b>	<b>43:2;48:9;49:18;50:9;</b>	<b>approval (2)</b> 6:23;13:9	<b>away (3)</b> 32:6;41:4,12
<b>\$15 (2)</b> 32:14,16	<b>adequacy (1)</b> 10:1	<b>52:15;54:2,10;56:18,</b>	<b>approvals (1)</b> 6:21	<b>B</b>
<b>\$4 (1)</b> 50:21	<b>adhere (1)</b> 42:13	<b>22;57:9</b>	<b>approve (5)</b> 29:11;37:22;48:16;	<b>back (13)</b> 7:21;16:7;17:19;
<b>\$40-some (1)</b> 51:21	<b>adjacent (1)</b> 34:4	<b>air (1)</b> 15:11	56:17;59:7	19:14;23:13,16;
<b>\$9 (1)</b> 50:21	<b>administer (1)</b> 12:15	<b>allow (2)</b> 4:3,7	<b>approved (2)</b> 5:2;9:7	29:12;30:15;37:21;
	<b>administrative (5)</b> 8:2;9:17;16:12;	<b>allowed (1)</b> 46:25	<b>approving (1)</b> 9:24	42:15;44:23;51:3;
	44:12;59:10	<b>along (3)</b> 22:13;42:5;45:8	<b>approximately (5)</b> 3:19;9:19;22:20,21;	59:8
	<b>adopted (1)</b> 31:23	<b>alternate (1)</b> 13:24	36:17	<b>Bakken (3)</b> 50:9,10,10
<b>A</b>	<b>advance (1)</b> 7:19	<b>alternative (2)</b> 10:8;15:8	<b>April (1)</b> 9:15	<b>B-A-K-K-E-N (1)</b> 50:11
<b>able (4)</b> 44:23;47:2;55:22, 24	<b>adverse (1)</b> 16:21	<b>alternatives (10)</b> 10:7;13:22,23;14:1, 4;15:5,6,10,20;16:5	<b>area (12)</b> 14:17;22:12,13;	<b>base (3)</b> 51:5,16;56:6
<b>absolutely (1)</b> 42:9	<b>advertising (1)</b> 21:13	<b>although (1)</b> 49:1	34:3,5;36:24;37:3,21;	<b>bases (1)</b> 51:1
<b>accept (1)</b> 7:14	<b>advice (1)</b> 59:18	<b>always (1)</b> 53:12	41:13;46:12;47:14;	<b>Basically (1)</b> 8:10
<b>acceptance (1)</b> 52:4	<b>advisor (3)</b> 5:10;11:11;59:15	<b>amount (1)</b> 37:8	54:15	<b>Beaver (1)</b> 50:15
<b>accepted (4)</b> 9:4,6,7;49:4	<b>advisors (1)</b> 12:13	<b>amounted (1)</b> 36:16	<b>areas (5)</b> 22:15,24;35:22;	<b>become (3)</b> 17:5;36:25;37:1
<b>access (2)</b> 22:22;34:23	<b>advocate (1)</b> 12:25	<b>ample (1)</b> 54:18	51:23;59:1	<b>becomes (1)</b> 53:12
<b>accessed (1)</b> 22:4	<b>affect (2)</b> 33:9;39:9	<b>Analysis (5)</b> 5:18;11:23;12:12, 17;14:18	<b>argumentative (1)</b> 41:9	<b>began (1)</b> 22:1
<b>accessibility (1)</b> 46:1	<b>affordable (1)</b> 4:2	<b>analyst (1)</b> 8:24	<b>art (1)</b> 13:23	<b>begin (3)</b> 22:9,10;24:6
<b>accomplished (1)</b> 31:18	<b>afterwards (1)</b> 45:2	<b>annual (2)</b> 21:5;32:14	<b>aspects (1)</b> 39:6	<b>behalf (2)</b> 9:2;12:25
<b>acquired (1)</b> 20:10	<b>ag (4)</b> 31:13,22;51:1,1	<b>answered (2)</b> 51:10;56:14	<b>assess (1)</b> 35:21	<b>behind (1)</b> 44:8
<b>across (2)</b> 38:6;41:18	<b>again (16)</b> 4:20;5:11,14;6:1, 19;7:1;9:16;11:10;	<b>anticipated (2)</b> 9:20;44:24	<b>assessing (1)</b> 36:4	<b>beneficial (2)</b> 48:14;56:7
<b>activities (5)</b> 20:25;22:24;23:5; 36:23;47:17	23:19;30:21;44:16;	<b>anxious (1)</b> 55:19	<b>assessment (2)</b> 9:14;35:21	<b>benefit (14)</b> 24:5;41:18;45:18;
<b>activity (1)</b> 25:6	47:10;57:19;59:2,8, 19	<b>anyways (1)</b> 39:4	<b>asset (2)</b> 20:9,11	46:25;47:2,22;50:4;
<b>acts (1)</b> 12:13	<b>agencies (2)</b> 21:18;27:7	<b>appease (1)</b> 33:17	<b>assigned (1)</b> 59:16	53:2;54:21,25;55:4, 14,16,25
<b>actually (4)</b> 7:18;20:7;21:17; 55:22	<b>agency (4)</b> 3:18;13:3;19:24; 20:15	<b>applicant (2)</b> 19:17;34:4	<b>assist (1)</b> 14:12	<b>benefits (6)</b> 19:7;21:8;26:18;
<b>adapt (1)</b> 27:8	<b>agenda (2)</b> 3:7;5:15	<b>application (13)</b> 5:16;8:5;9:1,4,5,6; 16:10,16,24;17:15;	<b>associated (1)</b> 4:24	29:5;46:15;56:2
<b>add (2)</b> 44:7;55:16	<b>agreement (1)</b> 19:25	42:10;44:18;48:16	<b>Assuming (1)</b> 22:7	<b>benefitting (1)</b> 42:3
<b>added (2)</b> 8:10;56:3	<b>agreements (3)</b> 16:3;36:2,4	<b>applications (1)</b> 18:6	<b>authority (1)</b> 13:3	<b>Benton (2)</b> 31:9;52:21
<b>addition (2)</b> 14:8;35:20	<b>agrees (1)</b> 44:20	<b>appreciate (13)</b> 5:11;11:14;18:22, 24;27:6;45:22;48:3;	<b>authorized (1)</b> 6:15	<b>best (1)</b> 34:22
<b>additional (4)</b> 10:19;19:13;42:17; 46:12	<b>agricultural (1)</b> 15:18	57:20;58:3,5,8,20,23	<b>authorizes (1)</b> 3:23	<b>better (4)</b> 10:7;27:4;47:25; 55:10
<b>address (2)</b> 34:25;45:6	<b>agriculture (1)</b> 56:7	<b>appreciation (1)</b> 58:6	<b>availability (2)</b> 15:19;46:6	<b>big (3)</b> 31:10;32:8;53:15
<b>addressed (1)</b>	<b>ahead (20)</b> 3:10;18:15;24:21; 27:16;28:8;31:2; 32:23;37:14;38:2,20;	<b>approached (1)</b> 52:7	<b>available (7)</b> 5:4;10:21;11:11; 13:2;23:25;56:11; 58:15	<b>biggest (1)</b> 32:2
		<b>appropriately (2)</b> 40:5;46:3	<b>avian-bat (1)</b> 17:6	<b>bill (1)</b> 25:16
			<b>avoid (4)</b> 8:13;14:5;16:20; 18:1	<b>billion (2)</b> 31:24,25
				<b>bird (1)</b>

<p>53:14 <b>bird-kill (1)</b> 53:12 <b>bit (5)</b> 4:14;6:17;33:17,20; 39:4 <b>blades (1)</b> 57:2 <b>board (4)</b> 50:20;51:9;54:24; 56:16 <b>border (4)</b> 33:18;39:2;46:10, 14 <b>both (4)</b> 9:25;13:10;26:8; 31:15 <b>bother (1)</b> 53:17 <b>boundary (1)</b> 22:16 <b>Bounded (1)</b> 55:6 <b>boxes (1)</b> 8:10 <b>Brandon (1)</b> 45:12 <b>breeze (1)</b> 57:3 <b>Brian (4)</b> 54:1,2,3,3 <b>bridges (1)</b> 50:22 <b>Bridget (1)</b> 23:23 <b>brief (1)</b> 19:5 <b>briefly (3)</b> 6:6;13:9;36:13 <b>bring (1)</b> 37:20 <b>bringing (1)</b> 41:23 <b>brothers (1)</b> 38:8 <b>Bruce (13)</b> 5:10;11:10;32:22, 23,24,24;34:12,15,19; 35:2,6;37:5,11 <b>B-R-U-C-E (1)</b> 32:25 <b>brush (1)</b> 22:10 <b>building (2)</b> 27:5;45:10 <b>built (2)</b> 32:8;45:9 <b>burden (1)</b> 51:23 <b>bushels (1)</b> 31:25 <b>business (4)</b> 21:2,4;51:4;55:7</p>	<p><b>businesses (5)</b> 55:5,8,12,13,19 <b>button (1)</b> 49:12 <b>byproduct (1)</b> 46:6</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>C</b></p> <p><b>call (3)</b> 3:9;6:8;59:24 <b>callers (1)</b> 58:24 <b>calling (3)</b> 25:3;27:20;28:17 <b>calls (1)</b> 7:15 <b>campground (2)</b> 55:22,25 <b>can (61)</b> 4:13;5:5,9;6:4,14; 7:7,14;10:8;12:2,5, 23;13:4,7;14:20,21; 16:7;18:10,14,15; 19:16;22:4;23:8,10; 29:16;30:13,14,22; 31:4,6;33:22,23; 34:12,21,24;35:7; 38:21,22;41:8,10; 42:15,24,25;44:7,7; 45:3;48:1;49:2,8,10, 12;51:22;52:17;53:6, 22;55:15,16;56:3,12, 17;57:19;58:13 <b>capacity (1)</b> 6:10 <b>car (1)</b> 57:15 <b>care (1)</b> 24:3 <b>Carlson (9)</b> 32:23,24,25;34:15, 19;35:2,6;37:5,11 <b>C-A-R-L-S-O-N (1)</b> 32:25 <b>cars (1)</b> 51:8 <b>case (2)</b> 7:3;34:5 <b>cause (4)</b> 13:7;27:20;41:7; 53:1 <b>cautiously (1)</b> 52:8 <b>Celem (4)</b> 27:15,16,18,19 <b>C-E-L-E-M (1)</b> 27:19 <b>cell (1)</b> 39:7 <b>certainly (4)</b> 11:5;12:7;24:15; 56:10</p>	<p><b>certificate (8)</b> 6:12,15,23,24;8:9, 15,25;9:25 <b>certificates (1)</b> 4:18 <b>challenging (1)</b> 27:8 <b>Chamber (4)</b> 54:15,24;56:16; 57:12 <b>chance (1)</b> 48:5 <b>changes (1)</b> 51:14 <b>characteristics (4)</b> 14:16;17:4,12;18:3 <b>charged (1)</b> 3:20 <b>Charley (5)</b> 5:10;11:10;34:12; 59:13,15 <b>cheap (1)</b> 53:21 <b>cheaper (1)</b> 47:23 <b>children (2)</b> 39:5,9 <b>choosing (1)</b> 7:4 <b>Cities (2)</b> 32:5;53:22 <b>citizens (1)</b> 48:15 <b>City (3)</b> 31:16;53:15;56:4 <b>clarity (2)</b> 44:5;47:12 <b>clean (5)</b> 20:17;21:7;26:1; 32:10;53:21 <b>clear (1)</b> 28:16 <b>climb (1)</b> 26:25 <b>close (7)</b> 9:21;24:1;39:2; 41:23;46:3;47:3; 58:18 <b>CN (1)</b> 13:12 <b>collaborated (1)</b> 21:24 <b>collaboration (1)</b> 21:22 <b>collect (1)</b> 45:11 <b>collector (1)</b> 15:24 <b>color (1)</b> 44:8 <b>combination (1)</b> 36:4 <b>combined (1)</b></p>	<p>8:8 <b>comfortable (1)</b> 52:1 <b>coming (6)</b> 3:13;23:21;51:24; 58:6,23;59:20 <b>commend (1)</b> 31:16 <b>comment (22)</b> 6:16;7:12,21;8:15, 16;24:16,20;27:11,12, 15,17;28:22;30:13; 42:24,25;49:11,16; 51:15;52:14;56:24; 57:23;58:14 <b>commenting (4)</b> 3:8;24:14,18;43:14 <b>comments (27)</b> 4:12,24;7:14,24; 8:5;14:10;15:3;17:24; 18:10,11;23:17,24; 24:2,8,11;30:17; 48:22;49:2,3,10; 57:24;58:3,10,13,14, 14;59:2 <b>Commerce (11)</b> 5:17;8:19,23;10:24; 11:22;12:9;23:20; 39:14;44:17;49:7; 50:12 <b>Commission (17)</b> 3:17,18;4:6;6:1,13, 14,21;7:16,20;8:7; 9:5;12:14;13:2;16:25; 22:8;59:6,16 <b>commissioner (2)</b> 31:13,22 <b>commissioners (1)</b> 3:19 <b>Commission's (3)</b> 9:20;16:4;17:17 <b>commitment (1)</b> 26:13 <b>communicated (2)</b> 21:17,24 <b>communication (2)</b> 21:16;39:25 <b>communities (1)</b> 46:14 <b>community (9)</b> 15:15;21:15;52:4, 10;54:17;55:16; 56:10;57:14,17 <b>company's (1)</b> 26:13 <b>compared (1)</b> 25:18 <b>Compatibility (2)</b> 10:4,9 <b>compensation (1)</b> 21:5 <b>completed (1)</b> 23:3</p>	<p><b>comply (1)</b> 35:23 <b>comprised (1)</b> 3:19 <b>concern (1)</b> 44:7 <b>concerned (3)</b> 40:10,11;42:6 <b>concerns (3)</b> 18:7;51:8;52:25 <b>concluded (1)</b> 60:2 <b>concludes (1)</b> 23:12 <b>conclusion (1)</b> 44:21 <b>conditions (6)</b> 5:1;7:6;17:3,5,6,10 <b>conduct (1)</b> 21:3 <b>conducted (1)</b> 21:12 <b>conducting (1)</b> 4:6 <b>conference (1)</b> 59:24 <b>conflicts (1)</b> 10:16 <b>confusing (1)</b> 12:1 <b>confusion (1)</b> 8:13 <b>Congress (1)</b> 31:23 <b>connect (1)</b> 5:7 <b>connecting (1)</b> 5:9 <b>conserve (2)</b> 10:13,14 <b>consider (8)</b> 4:11;7:18;10:1,6,8; 12:23;59:6,11 <b>consideration (3)</b> 17:17;37:24;57:6 <b>considered (4)</b> 7:25;14:17;17:11, 13 <b>considering (1)</b> 37:22 <b>consist (3)</b> 20:18,20;21:5 <b>constituency (1)</b> 13:1 <b>construct (2)</b> 6:22;22:22 <b>constructed (1)</b> 6:14 <b>constructing (1)</b> 22:9 <b>construction (22)</b> 3:23;19:12;20:24, 25;21:1,4;22:7,12,13,</p>
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<p>14,24;23:4;25:2,20, 24;26:7,18;36:22; 39:21;46:11;47:17; 55:4 <b>consultant (2)</b> 42:12;44:20 <b>consulting (1)</b> 21:14 <b>consumers (1)</b> 53:22 <b>contact (8)</b> 19:13;23:7;34:11, 15,19,21;45:2;59:12 <b>contacted (1)</b> 43:13 <b>content (1)</b> 16:2 <b>contents (1)</b> 14:22 <b>context (1)</b> 12:1 <b>continue (8)</b> 4:1;20:11;23:4; 40:3;50:25;51:17,19; 57:25 <b>contractors (1)</b> 28:13 <b>contractors' (1)</b> 22:17 <b>contribute (1)</b> 25:5 <b>controlling (1)</b> 23:2 <b>conversion (1)</b> 6:8 <b>cooperative (1)</b> 47:4 <b>coordinated (1)</b> 47:15 <b>coordination (1)</b> 21:22 <b>corn (1)</b> 31:25 <b>corner (1)</b> 55:6 <b>corridor (1)</b> 45:8 <b>Cory (3)</b> 49:18,21,21 <b>cost (3)</b> 33:15;50:21;51:17 <b>cost-effective (1)</b> 10:17 <b>costs (2)</b> 47:4;50:25 <b>counties (1)</b> 32:17 <b>County (19)</b> 3:15;20:4;21:20; 29:9;31:16,19;32:12, 18,19;48:12,15;51:2, 4;52:12,23;54:22; 55:3;56:5,19</p>	<p><b>couple (8)</b> 7:11;15:4,21;18:13; 23:9,16;24:2;49:10 <b>course (4)</b> 6:25;26:7;36:1; 45:10 <b>court (4)</b> 23:22;24:6;29:16, 24 <b>cover (1)</b> 15:22 <b>COVID-19 (2)</b> 4:7;25:10 <b>create (4)</b> 26:3,4,6,24 <b>creating (1)</b> 52:4 <b>Creek (1)</b> 50:15 <b>crisis (2)</b> 26:5;27:1 <b>culverts (1)</b> 50:22 <b>currently (4)</b> 8:16;36:10,21; 51:19 <b>customers (2)</b> 32:5;53:23 <b>CVB (1)</b> 54:15</p>	<p>43:15,16;44:10,25; 45:5;46:20;47:21 <b>D-E-B-B-I-E (1)</b> 38:25 <b>debris (1)</b> 22:25 <b>decision (6)</b> 8:1,7;9:20;12:24; 15:1;16:6 <b>decision-makers (2)</b> 12:23;14:13 <b>decision-making (1)</b> 13:3 <b>decisions (1)</b> 6:4 <b>decommissioned (1)</b> 36:22 <b>decommissioning (2)</b> 19:12;51:12 <b>defined (1)</b> 6:11 <b>definitely (3)</b> 25:12;40:20,20 <b>degree (1)</b> 26:22 <b>Delavan (1)</b> 29:1 <b>deliver (4)</b> 31:25;32:4,8;53:22 <b>delivered (1)</b> 32:11 <b>deliveries (1)</b> 22:17 <b>delivery (1)</b> 21:7 <b>demonstrate (1)</b> 8:11 <b>demonstrates (1)</b> 6:24 <b>dense (1)</b> 47:7 <b>Department (12)</b> 5:17;8:19,23;10:24; 11:22;12:9;23:20; 39:14;40:4;44:17; 49:7;50:12 <b>depending (1)</b> 17:3 <b>depth (2)</b> 22:20;44:8 <b>depths (1)</b> 27:1 <b>describes (3)</b> 13:21;16:18,19 <b>description (1)</b> 5:20 <b>design (1)</b> 45:24 <b>desperately (1)</b> 25:8 <b>detail (1)</b> 9:22 <b>detailed (1)</b></p>	<p>49:6 <b>details (2)</b> 5:21;15:23 <b>devastated (1)</b> 25:11 <b>develop (4)</b> 8:19;12:22;20:11; 58:4 <b>developed (3)</b> 8:4;33:25;52:2 <b>developer (5)</b> 18:23;23:7;26:12; 35:15;45:20 <b>developing (1)</b> 44:19 <b>development (9)</b> 4:4,22;14:19;16:1, 10,25;17:16;22:1; 56:18 <b>diameter (1)</b> 22:21 <b>difference (1)</b> 13:8 <b>different (5)</b> 13:12;14:1;18:13; 51:23;57:17 <b>difficulties (1)</b> 5:9 <b>dining (1)</b> 21:3 <b>direction (1)</b> 57:19 <b>directly (1)</b> 23:8 <b>director (2)</b> 54:14;57:12 <b>disconnect (1)</b> 60:1 <b>disconnected (1)</b> 43:22 <b>discrete (2)</b> 13:14,15 <b>discuss (1)</b> 19:7 <b>discussion (2)</b> 19:4,15 <b>dismantling (1)</b> 23:1 <b>disposal (1)</b> 23:1 <b>disruption (1)</b> 51:11 <b>distribute (1)</b> 51:22 <b>distributed (2)</b> 5:6;19:10 <b>distribution (1)</b> 25:13 <b>district (1)</b> 56:5 <b>districts (1)</b> 28:14 <b>disturbed (1)</b></p>	<p>22:24 <b>diversifies (1)</b> 50:17 <b>diversify (1)</b> 51:5 <b>diversifying (2)</b> 51:3,16 <b>division (1)</b> 12:12 <b>docket (10)</b> 8:6;11:3;19:11; 22:4,5;23:10;44:3,6, 10,13 <b>document (2)</b> 13:14,16 <b>documentation (1)</b> 10:3 <b>dollar (1)</b> 51:6 <b>dollars (3)</b> 25:6;50:24;51:18 <b>done (2)</b> 34:7;37:17 <b>dot (3)</b> 35:4,5,5 <b>down (4)</b> 26:20;35:1;36:20; 55:9 <b>dozens (2)</b> 53:9,9 <b>draft (12)</b> 4:23;7:13,17,20; 15:2;16:1,11,25; 17:10,16;59:6,7 <b>dried (1)</b> 26:1 <b>drive (1)</b> 58:7 <b>drove (1)</b> 36:7 <b>due (3)</b> 28:11;46:10;59:2 <b>during (8)</b> 3:4,6;4:5;21:4; 25:21;39:21;45:10; 55:3</p>
	<b>D</b>			<b>E</b>
	<p><b>Dakota (15)</b> 25:1;33:1,5,18; 34:6;38:7,7;41:19; 42:4;45:7;46:10,16; 53:1,3;55:7 <b>Dakotas (1)</b> 38:12 <b>Dakota's (1)</b> 41:22 <b>Dan (3)</b> 28:7,9,9 <b>data (1)</b> 44:5 <b>date (1)</b> 9:4 <b>Dave (1)</b> 31:17 <b>David (1)</b> 30:1 <b>day (3)</b> 18:12;58:8,11 <b>days (1)</b> 9:18 <b>dealership (1)</b> 57:16 <b>dealing (1)</b> 42:5 <b>Debbie (16)</b> 38:20,20,21,24,25; 40:16;41:2,15,21;</p>	<p><b>earlier (4)</b> 14:25;16:9;29:20; 47:20 <b>early (2)</b> 7:24;25:21 <b>ease (1)</b> 51:12 <b>easement (2)</b> 16:3;22:12 <b>easements (1)</b> 47:16 <b>east (1)</b> 33:13 <b>echo (2)</b></p>		



<p>38:8,16  <b>economic (15)</b>                  25:6,8,15;26:5,23;                  27:1;29:13;38:14;                  41:17;48:14;52:10;                  54:20,21;55:9;56:18  <b>economically (2)</b>                  46:9,15  <b>economies (1)</b>                  15:16  <b>economy (6)</b>                  25:11,20;37:20;                  51:6,22;57:5  <b>eDockets (1)</b>                  11:2  <b>educating (1)</b>                  21:14  <b>EERA (1)</b>                  12:24  <b>efficiency (1)</b>                  10:2  <b>efficient (1)</b>                  10:17  <b>efficiently (1)</b>                  7:7  <b>efforts (1)</b>                  20:17  <b>eight (1)</b>                  31:22  <b>either (2)</b>                  18:5;34:12  <b>elected (1)</b>                  50:15  <b>electric (1)</b>                  15:18  <b>electrical (1)</b>                  7:1  <b>electricity (4)</b>                  3:21;20:16;32:4;                  36:21  <b>else (7)</b>                  27:11;28:5;30:14;                  48:1;49:15;58:2,17  <b>e-mail (8)</b>                  23:8;34:23,25;                  43:21;45:3;48:5;                  49:11;58:13  <b>e-mails (2)</b>                  4:15;7:15  <b>emitting (1)</b>                  39:8  <b>employees (1)</b>                  55:15  <b>employment (1)</b>                  38:13  <b>encourage (4)</b>                  4:11;11:6;29:11;                  34:10  <b>end (2)</b>                  18:12;58:11  <b>ends (1)</b>                  59:24  <b>energy (31)</b></p>	<p>3:16,24;4:2;5:18;                  6:7,12;10:2;11:22;                  12:11,14,16,20;19:20,                  21,22;20:6,12,17;                  21:8,10;26:2;31:15,                  19;32:3,8,10;39:16;                  47:1,3,23;54:16  <b>Engineers (1)</b>                  38:6  <b>enough (2)</b>                  26:20,21  <b>ensure (7)</b>                  4:1;7:6,25;10:16;                  21:8;40:5,13  <b>enter (2)</b>                  36:1,3  <b>entered (1)</b>                  8:21  <b>entire (1)</b>                  8:3  <b>entirely (1)</b>                  20:4  <b>environmental (35)</b>                  3:14;4:23;5:18,19;                  7:2;8:19;9:12,13,14;                  11:23,25;12:12,15,18;                  13:10,13,14,15,19;                  14:3,10,11,14,22;                  15:1,4,22;16:8;17:25;                  19:1;21:19;35:25;                  44:19;54:21;59:5  <b>environments (1)</b>                  10:6  <b>equally (1)</b>                  7:16  <b>equipment (4)</b>                  22:15,18;39:25;                  40:22  <b>equivalent (1)</b>                  26:6  <b>ER (1)</b>                  14:2  <b>erosion (1)</b>                  23:2  <b>errors (1)</b>                  39:21  <b>especially (2)</b>                  29:13;31:17  <b>establishing (2)</b>                  7:5;55:22  <b>estimated (1)</b>                  9:15  <b>ethanol (3)</b>                  31:15,22;32:1  <b>evaluation (1)</b>                  42:24  <b>even (4)</b>                  21:23;23:3;32:5;                  58:6  <b>evening (6)</b>                  3:12;11:19;19:5;                  24:23;27:6;28:23  <b>events (1)</b></p>	<p>40:24  <b>everybody (3)</b>                  3:12;24:10;58:21  <b>everyone (1)</b>                  57:4  <b>everyone's (1)</b>                  27:6  <b>exact (1)</b>                  37:8  <b>exactly (1)</b>                  29:19  <b>example (3)</b>                  10:1;14:25;17:6  <b>excavating (1)</b>                  22:19  <b>exceed (3)</b>                  20:17;40:14,16  <b>excuse (1)</b>                  10:14  <b>executed (2)</b>                  20:1,13  <b>executive (1)</b>                  54:14  <b>existing (1)</b>                  51:14  <b>expect (2)</b>                  39:19;41:10  <b>expenses (1)</b>                  56:4  <b>expert (1)</b>                  42:23  <b>explore (2)</b>                  12:21;15:10  <b>express (2)</b>                  25:4;58:5  <b>expressed (1)</b>                  24:13  <b>extent (1)</b>                  33:23  <b>extreme (1)</b>                  54:25</p>	<p><b>farm (8)</b>                  21:9;25:4;26:2,19;                  27:3;31:10;36:8;                  52:22  <b>farmed (2)</b>                  31:9;53:13  <b>farmer (2)</b>                  50:17;52:21  <b>farmers (5)</b>                  31:14;32:11,12,15,                  19  <b>farming (1)</b>                  51:12  <b>farms (6)</b>                  4:19;6:9;32:15;                  47:1,24;53:23  <b>favorable (1)</b>                  35:22  <b>fax (3)</b>                  7:15;49:11;58:14  <b>feasibility (1)</b>                  15:20  <b>federal (1)</b>                  10:11  <b>feedback (2)</b>                  4:9,11  <b>feet (3)</b>                  22:20,21;53:5  <b>felt (1)</b>                  52:1  <b>fenced (1)</b>                  40:8  <b>few (3)</b>                  33:6;49:24,25  <b>field (1)</b>                  51:11  <b>file (1)</b>                  9:17  <b>filed (1)</b>                  9:4  <b>filing (1)</b>                  11:2  <b>filings (1)</b>                  8:5  <b>fill (2)</b>                  49:12;55:25  <b>final (1)</b>                  16:13  <b>finally (7)</b>                  5:22;9:19;10:9,16;                  11:10;16:11;23:6  <b>financing (1)</b>                  55:23  <b>finding (1)</b>                  36:6  <b>fine (3)</b>                  6:9;30:7,16  <b>fingertips (1)</b>                  44:22  <b>finishing (1)</b>                  31:21  <b>first (6)</b>                  6:22;10:23;19:16;</p>	<p>24:20;49:10;52:6  <b>fits (2)</b>                  8:11;25:16  <b>five (2)</b>                  3:19;24:8  <b>five- (1)</b>                  50:22  <b>flicker (1)</b>                  15:15  <b>focus (1)</b>                  13:1  <b>focused (1)</b>                  21:13  <b>focuses (1)</b>                  14:11  <b>folks (1)</b>                  25:10  <b>following (3)</b>                  19:11;22:24;24:1  <b>follow-up (4)</b>                  49:17;56:21;58:9;                  59:4  <b>forgive (1)</b>                  39:3  <b>form (2)</b>                  49:11;58:14  <b>formerly (1)</b>                  36:11  <b>forward (10)</b>                  5:5;16:14;20:22;                  21:11;22:2;27:5;52:9;                  55:20;56:14;57:4  <b>found (2)</b>                  23:11;27:1  <b>foundations (1)</b>                  22:19  <b>four (2)</b>                  20:19;37:17  <b>four-year (1)</b>                  26:22  <b>FRANCO (3)</b>                  24:23,24;27:11  <b>F-R-A-N-C-O (1)</b>                  24:24  <b>frustrating (1)</b>                  45:16  <b>fuel (1)</b>                  31:24  <b>full (1)</b>                  7:19  <b>full-time (1)</b>                  26:6  <b>fully (1)</b>                  58:4  <b>further (5)</b>                  20:17;32:6;48:21;                  57:24;59:11  <b>future (8)</b>                  21:8;31:14;34:14;                  35:9,10;52:9;55:23;                  59:4</p>
		<b>F</b>		
		<p><b>FAA (1)</b>                  40:4  <b>facilitate (1)</b>                  22:16  <b>facilities (3)</b>                  3:16,24;23:2  <b>facility (1)</b>                  6:12  <b>facts (1)</b>                  13:2  <b>Falls (3)</b>                  41:23,24;45:12  <b>family (2)</b>                  27:23;55:21  <b>family-supporting (2)</b>                  26:3,7  <b>far (6)</b>                  19:8;35:19;36:9;                  46:23,24;47:23</p>		

<p><b>G</b></p> <p><b>gal (1)</b> 56:25</p> <p><b>gallons (1)</b> 31:24</p> <p><b>Gary (8)</b> 48:9,9,10,10;57:8,9,10,10</p> <p><b>G-A-R-Y (1)</b> 48:11</p> <p><b>gas (2)</b> 3:21,21</p> <p><b>gather (1)</b> 14:10</p> <p><b>GE (2)</b> 20:18,19</p> <p><b>general (6)</b> 5:25;16:23;17:9;18:6;21:3;37:3</p> <p><b>generally (3)</b> 24:1;50:22;51:7</p> <p><b>generate (1)</b> 26:8</p> <p><b>generating (1)</b> 36:21</p> <p><b>Generation (1)</b> 19:23</p> <p><b>generator (1)</b> 19:21</p> <p><b>generic (1)</b> 15:7</p> <p><b>gentle (1)</b> 53:8</p> <p><b>gentlemen (3)</b> 3:1;24:16;59:24</p> <p><b>gets (3)</b> 34:13;40:25;51:7</p> <p><b>gives (1)</b> 12:1</p> <p><b>giving (2)</b> 28:24;50:12</p> <p><b>global (1)</b> 25:10</p> <p><b>goal (1)</b> 12:16</p> <p><b>goals (1)</b> 21:10</p> <p><b>gonna (16)</b> 27:23;28:1,2;39:2;40:17,18;41:3,4,5,6,7,12;45:16;48:13;56:6;57:14</p> <p><b>Good (16)</b> 3:11;10:25;11:19;18:18,20;24:23;26:3;28:23;29:6,15;30:9,24;32:12;37:21;56:9;58:25</p> <p><b>Goodnight (1)</b> 59:21</p> <p><b>Google (1)</b></p>	<p>49:9</p> <p><b>G-O-V (1)</b> 5:5</p> <p><b>government (1)</b> 21:19</p> <p><b>governments (1)</b> 10:11</p> <p><b>grants (1)</b> 22:8</p> <p><b>gravel (1)</b> 50:20</p> <p><b>great (13)</b> 9:22;29:5;32:1,7,17,18,19;38:10,12,14;41:17;47:10;57:14</p> <p><b>greater (2)</b> 6:11;52:4</p> <p><b>greatly (1)</b> 57:20</p> <p><b>grew (1)</b> 29:9</p> <p><b>grid (1)</b> 46:7</p> <p><b>ground (2)</b> 24:2;53:13</p> <p><b>groups (1)</b> 53:9</p> <p><b>growth (1)</b> 29:13</p> <p><b>guarded (1)</b> 52:7</p> <p><b>guess (5)</b> 33:18;39:7;42:6;47:6;48:12</p> <p><b>guys (1)</b> 19:14</p> <p><b>H</b></p> <p><b>half (6)</b> 33:4,4;39:1;41:4,12;54:17</p> <p><b>hand (2)</b> 10:22;44:5</p> <p><b>hang (2)</b> 30:11,13</p> <p><b>happen (2)</b> 39:11;56:18</p> <p><b>happened (1)</b> 46:1</p> <p><b>happy (5)</b> 11:8;43:23;47:11;59:13,18</p> <p><b>hard (1)</b> 31:21</p> <p><b>hats (1)</b> 50:14</p> <p><b>hazardous (1)</b> 15:12</p> <p><b>head (2)</b> 37:9;57:13</p> <p><b>health (4)</b> 10:5;15:17;39:10,</p>	<p>10</p> <p><b>hear (11)</b> 4:21;9:11;31:5;38:21;39:7;40:17;52:17;53:6,7,8,10</p> <p><b>heard (3)</b> 33:7;46:22;52:17</p> <p><b>hearing (13)</b> 7:22;8:1,22;9:15;16:12;40:18,21;42:15;44:11,12,13,23;59:10</p> <p><b>hearings (1)</b> 3:5</p> <p><b>hello (4)</b> 3:2;27:18;43:9;49:21</p> <p><b>help (21)</b> 4:7;14:18;17:15;26:4,25;27:21,22,23;28:1,2;40:6;41:21;45:7,9,10;53:21;57:18,19;59:14,16,18</p> <p><b>helped (1)</b> 25:22</p> <p><b>helping (2)</b> 28:14;57:5</p> <p><b>Here's (2)</b> 9:3;22:2</p> <p><b>Hi (6)</b> 28:9,23;38:3;43:11;50:10;54:11</p> <p><b>high (3)</b> 43:25;44:2;47:3</p> <p><b>highlight (1)</b> 10:23</p> <p><b>Highway (1)</b> 33:13</p> <p><b>Hit (3)</b> 12:3,6;57:13</p> <p><b>hits (1)</b> 49:10</p> <p><b>hold (1)</b> 44:1</p> <p><b>hole (1)</b> 22:19</p> <p><b>home (2)</b> 53:6,7</p> <p><b>homeowners (1)</b> 56:6</p> <p><b>hometown (1)</b> 42:1</p> <p><b>honest (1)</b> 34:7</p> <p><b>hope (2)</b> 6:5;25:12</p> <p><b>hopefully (1)</b> 57:4</p> <p><b>hopes (1)</b> 11:25</p> <p><b>horizon (1)</b> 25:12</p> <p><b>hosted (1)</b></p>	<p>53:9</p> <p><b>hotel (1)</b> 21:2</p> <p><b>house (3)</b> 22:17;26:21;47:17</p> <p><b>huge (3)</b> 33:15;55:4,25</p> <p><b>human (8)</b> 10:5,15;12:18;14:3,14;15:14;17:25;26:16</p> <p><b>hundred (2)</b> 11:4;26:6</p> <p><b>hurt (1)</b> 40:18</p> <p><b>hurting (1)</b> 40:21</p> <p><b>I</b></p> <p><b>identifies (2)</b> 16:21;34:4</p> <p><b>identify (3)</b> 12:21;14:4;43:4</p> <p><b>impact (9)</b> 12:21;14:3;15:10,14;26:11;41:13,17;48:14;52:10</p> <p><b>impacts (27)</b> 4:10,24;5:1;7:8;10:13,14,15;12:18;14:5,14;15:13,14,15,16,18;16:19,20,21;17:24;18:1,2;26:12,16;40:6,9;42:13;46:9</p> <p><b>important (4)</b> 4:4;26:15;37:20;50:3</p> <p><b>importantly (1)</b> 26:22</p> <p><b>include (2)</b> 6:3;15:2</p> <p><b>including (5)</b> 8:3;12:19;15:12;23:1;25:2</p> <p><b>inclusive (1)</b> 22:25</p> <p><b>income (1)</b> 29:5</p> <p><b>incorporated (3)</b> 13:16;16:9;17:9</p> <p><b>increase (2)</b> 21:1;50:25</p> <p><b>increases (1)</b> 21:2</p> <p><b>independent (1)</b> 6:2</p> <p><b>in-depth (1)</b> 44:4</p> <p><b>indicated (1)</b> 26:13</p> <p><b>indicative (1)</b> 40:21</p> <p><b>indirect (1)</b></p>	<p>19:19</p> <p><b>individual (2)</b> 22:23;35:13</p> <p><b>inform (2)</b> 14:18;17:15</p> <p><b>informally (1)</b> 6:16</p> <p><b>information (34)</b> 3:3,13;4:16;5:7,8;9:8,10,11;10:19;11:4,7,12,12;14:12;15:3,23;16:23;17:21;19:1,13;23:7,11;40:12;42:9,17;44:3,4,18,20;45:4;49:5,6;58:5,15</p> <p><b>informed (2)</b> 13:5;17:11</p> <p><b>informs (1)</b> 16:13</p> <p><b>infrastructure (6)</b> 4:4;10:18;12:19;15:17;47:17;50:25</p> <p><b>initial (2)</b> 24:8,11</p> <p><b>initially (1)</b> 52:5</p> <p><b>inject (1)</b> 25:22</p> <p><b>input (3)</b> 5:24;7:22;9:1</p> <p><b>insurance (1)</b> 25:23</p> <p><b>integral (1)</b> 21:7</p> <p><b>interconnection (4)</b> 20:8;45:25;46:1,4</p> <p><b>interest (2)</b> 10:4;24:13</p> <p><b>interfere (1)</b> 39:25</p> <p><b>interrupt (2)</b> 30:6,25</p> <p><b>into (12)</b> 8:11,21;13:16;16:9;17:9;25:22;29:7;36:2,3;46:9;51:22;54:17</p> <p><b>introduced (1)</b> 54:18</p> <p><b>introductions (1)</b> 5:15</p> <p><b>invest (1)</b> 55:15</p> <p><b>investment (2)</b> 25:15;55:2</p> <p><b>investments (2)</b> 26:1,23</p> <p><b>investor (1)</b> 57:16</p> <p><b>involved (3)</b> 21:15;50:5;56:10</p> <p><b>Iowa (1)</b> 55:6</p> <p><b>issuance (2)</b></p>
---	---	--	--	--

<p>59:5,7 <b>issue (6)</b> 7:17;33:23;52:25; 53:11,12;57:3 <b>issued (1)</b> 9:15 <b>issues (7)</b> 7:12,20;13:20; 17:11;18:7;39:20,22 <b>item (1)</b> 3:6 <b>items (2)</b> 17:13;18:5</p>	<p><b>keypad (1)</b> 3:6 <b>killed (1)</b> 53:14 <b>K-I-N (1)</b> 29:25 <b>kind (14)</b> 8:12;9:23;13:11; 38:15;39:4,5;40:18, 25;41:3;45:13,15; 47:7;57:18,18 <b>Kindt (10)</b> 28:21,23,25;29:22, 25;30:4,7,10,16,20 <b>knew (1)</b> 52:5 <b>known (2)</b> 36:12;39:11 <b>Kolsrud (1)</b> 31:17 <b>Kroger (7)</b> 37:14,15,15;56:22, 23,23,24 <b>K-R-O-G-E-R (2)</b> 37:16;56:24 <b>KRUEGER (2)</b> 49:21,22 <b>K-R-U-E-G-E-R (1)</b> 49:22</p>	<p>54:10,11,11 <b>L-A-N-P-H-E-R-E (1)</b> 54:12 <b>lapsed (1)</b> 30:22 <b>large (7)</b> 3:23;6:7,12;12:14, 16;39:17,22 <b>largest (1)</b> 19:21 <b>last (9)</b> 23:6;29:4,17;35:16; 38:4;46:21;49:25; 54:16;57:11 <b>lastly (1)</b> 35:25 <b>late (1)</b> 9:23 <b>later (5)</b> 4:14;6:17;30:14,25; 58:10 <b>law (6)</b> 8:2;9:17;16:12; 31:20,23;59:10 <b>laydown (1)</b> 22:15 <b>layout (1)</b> 16:18 <b>learn (2)</b> 4:8;54:19 <b>learning (2)</b> 39:24;40:1 <b>lease (1)</b> 36:2 <b>least (2)</b> 24:10;59:1 <b>legal (1)</b> 59:18 <b>less (1)</b> 33:4 <b>levels (1)</b> 56:1 <b>life (1)</b> 31:9 <b>lifetime (1)</b> 55:1 <b>light (3)</b> 32:5,11;53:23 <b>lighting (1)</b> 15:15 <b>lights (3)</b> 40:2;53:14,16 <b>limit (2)</b> 4:7;24:7 <b>limited (3)</b> 12:20;39:20;45:6 <b>limits (1)</b> 42:20 <b>Lincoln (3)</b> 32:12,19;52:23 <b>line (39)</b> 9:13;10:23;18:18; 24:21;27:15;28:6,7,8,</p>	<p>20,21;29:21;30:11; 31:1,2,3;32:22;33:2, 5;37:13,13,14;38:1, 19;42:25;43:12,14, 19;48:8,9;49:16,18, 20;50:8;52:15;54:1,9; 56:21;57:8;58:2 <b>lines (2)</b> 15:24;33:15 <b>link (1)</b> 14:24 <b>links (1)</b> 23:9 <b>list (4)</b> 21:23;34:11,13; 35:8 <b>listed (3)</b> 10:19;21:20,23 <b>listen (2)</b> 30:17;53:10 <b>lit (1)</b> 40:5 <b>little (5)</b> 33:17,20;39:4;44:8; 53:16 <b>live (2)</b> 39:1;53:15 <b>livestock's (1)</b> 39:10 <b>living (1)</b> 41:8 <b>LLC (3)</b> 19:19;20:10;23:8 <b>local (15)</b> 10:10;15:16;21:1, 17;26:14,17;27:20; 29:2;31:17;34:9; 37:16;38:5;40:7; 49:23;51:6 <b>located (4)</b> 20:4;35:13;46:19; 48:7 <b>location (7)</b> 7:4;15:23;36:8; 39:23;45:2;46:5; 50:16 <b>locational (1)</b> 15:23 <b>locations (1)</b> 7:5 <b>long (2)</b> 25:14,19 <b>long-term (1)</b> 19:25 <b>look (16)</b> 9:24;14:1;15:5,7, 22;16:1,2,4;22:5; 23:25;27:5;35:23; 45:3;52:9;55:13;56:2 <b>looking (9)</b> 13:23;17:21,24; 40:15;41:15;43:18; 45:13;56:14;57:4</p>	<p><b>looks (1)</b> 14:2 <b>lot (12)</b> 7:10;12:9;24:3; 25:22,24;38:9;44:3,4; 53:3;57:16;58:22,25 <b>low-growing (1)</b> 22:11 <b>Lucas (3)</b> 24:21,23,24 <b>L-U-C-A-S (1)</b> 24:24 <b>Luverne (2)</b> 31:16;54:14</p>
<b>J</b>				<b>M</b>
<p><b>Jane (5)</b> 54:9,10,11,11; 57:12 <b>J-A-N-E (1)</b> 54:12 <b>January (7)</b> 7:13;9:9;18:13; 49:5,14;58:11;59:3 <b>Jim (8)</b> 31:2,4,8,8;52:15,15, 16,20 <b>job (6)</b> 12:21;20:24;26:19; 28:11;29:4;37:19 <b>jobs (7)</b> 26:3,7;28:16;29:14; 37:20;54:6;55:3 <b>join (1)</b> 44:7 <b>joining (1)</b> 3:2 <b>judge (5)</b> 8:2;9:17;16:13; 44:12;59:11 <b>Julie (13)</b> 28:21,21,23,25; 29:16,20,22,25;30:4, 7,10,16,20 <b>July (3)</b> 9:4,19;16:17 <b>Jurgen (2)</b> 43:9;49:16</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>L</b></p> <p><b>labor (3)</b> 17:8,8;26:14 <b>laborer (3)</b> 29:1;49:23;54:5 <b>Laborers (1)</b> 49:23 <b>Laborers' (7)</b> 24:25;27:20,22; 28:2,11;38:8;54:5 <b>Ladies (3)</b> 3:1;24:15;59:23 <b>Lake (2)</b> 31:9;52:21 <b>Lampeter (1)</b> 43:18 <b>land (3)</b> 10:16;33:2;51:1 <b>Landi (1)</b> 8:23 <b>landowner (7)</b> 26:8;46:22;47:5,13, 19;50:2,14 <b>landowners (11)</b> 21:6,14,16;31:17; 34:4,6;36:1,3,6; 47:14;51:20 <b>landowner's (1)</b> 41:16 <b>landscape (1)</b> 51:14 <b>Lanphere (3)</b></p>			<p><b>ma'am (8)</b> 24:15;27:14;28:6; 45:19,22;47:9;48:2; 49:17 <b>mail (1)</b> 58:14 <b>mailing (3)</b> 34:11,13;35:8 <b>main (3)</b> 7:2;51:7;56:12 <b>Mainly (2)</b> 51:1;54:6 <b>maintain (1)</b> 50:24 <b>maintenance (1)</b> 22:13 <b>making (2)</b> 13:1;36:5 <b>malfunxion (1)</b> 40:22 <b>manager (1)</b> 24:25 <b>Mankato (1)</b> 29:2 <b>many (14)</b> 9:24;17:5;25:3,23; 27:24;28:13;29:6,8, 12;33:11;54:18;55:8; 56:1,1 <b>map (1)</b> 19:9 <b>March (2)</b> 25:18,19 <b>market (2)</b> 32:1,2 <b>Marshall (1)</b> 49:22 <b>match (1)</b> 22:3 <b>material (1)</b> 22:16 <b>materials (2)</b> 14:25;22:14 <b>Matthew (1)</b> 8:23 <b>maximize (2)</b></p>
<b>K</b>				
<p><b>Kaluzniak (11)</b> 3:10,11,12;12:4,7; 18:20;23:16;43:9,11, 12;58:19 <b>keep (1)</b> 42:12 <b>Kelly (1)</b> 23:23 <b>kept (1)</b> 55:8 <b>key (2)</b> 3:8;24:19</p>				

<p>26:11,17 <b>may (6)</b> 8:14;9:16;14:9; 17:22,25;59:25 <b>maybe (5)</b> 33:16,17;34:6;44:7; 47:22 <b>McGowan (3)</b> 28:7,9,10 <b>M-C-G-O-W-A-N (1)</b> 28:10 <b>mean (11)</b> 9:6;26:20;39:7; 40:17;41:5,7;43:15; 45:12,14;46:25;47:4 <b>means (2)</b> 9:7;58:22 <b>meant (2)</b> 41:3;47:18 <b>measures (2)</b> 4:25;12:22 <b>meet (3)</b> 13:24;14:15;18:2 <b>meeting (13)</b> 3:3,14;5:4,14;8:18; 9:10;12:11;14:7;19:2, 11;23:25;28:12,13 <b>meetings (2)</b> 4:6;35:10 <b>meeting's (1)</b> 4:20 <b>megawatt (2)</b> 20:19,19 <b>megawatts (4)</b> 6:11;20:7;32:3; 36:17 <b>melded (1)</b> 40:25 <b>members (8)</b> 3:20;4:8;20:16; 21:15;27:4;38:6,13; 54:24 <b>mention (1)</b> 29:6 <b>mentioned (5)</b> 16:9;18:9;20:14; 36:13;46:8 <b>mentioning (1)</b> 47:12 <b>mere (2)</b> 46:11,17 <b>merely (1)</b> 47:13 <b>merge (1)</b> 8:12 <b>met (1)</b> 14:1 <b>methods (1)</b> 13:24 <b>Michael (9)</b> 3:9,11,12;12:4,7; 18:20;43:9,11;58:19 <b>Michelle (1)</b></p>	<p>42:17 <b>might (4)</b> 5:1,24;36:10;42:13 <b>Mike (37)</b> 11:18;12:3,3,5; 13:8,20;14:25;18:9, 17,18,19,22,23;19:3; 20:2,22;21:11;23:14, 16,16;35:14,15,19; 37:7,12;42:16,22; 43:2,6,11,21;45:19, 20;47:9,10;48:2; 58:17 <b>M-I-K-E (2)</b> 35:15;45:21 <b>mile (6)</b> 33:4,4;39:1;41:4, 12;53:6 <b>milestones (1)</b> 35:9 <b>million (4)</b> 32:14,16;51:21; 55:2 <b>millions (2)</b> 25:6;26:8 <b>minimize (7)</b> 10:13,13,15,15; 16:20;18:1;40:6 <b>minimizes (1)</b> 7:7 <b>minimizing (1)</b> 8:13 <b>Minnesota (44)</b> 3:17,22;4:19;11:22; 19:24;20:4,14;21:9; 23:20;25:1,2,3,7,7; 26:3,25;27:4;28:12; 29:1,4,7,13;31:9; 32:13;35:5;38:7,11; 39:1,17;40:4;41:18; 42:3,14;43:25;44:1; 45:18;46:2,6,16,19; 49:22;52:24;54:4,22 <b>Minnesotans (2)</b> 4:1;29:12 <b>Minnesota's (3)</b> 20:17;25:11;35:24 <b>minute (1)</b> 48:24 <b>minutes (1)</b> 24:8 <b>mischaracterized (2)</b> 17:14;18:5 <b>misordered (1)</b> 14:21 <b>missing (2)</b> 17:14;18:5 <b>mission (2)</b> 3:25;5:25 <b>mitigate (3)</b> 14:5;16:20;18:1 <b>mitigation (2)</b> 4:25;12:22</p>	<p><b>mitigations (1)</b> 15:10 <b>Mm-hmm (2)</b> 41:14,20 <b>MMPA's (1)</b> 20:16 <b>MN (1)</b> 36:12 <b>mngov (2)</b> 5:5;23:10 <b>modify (1)</b> 22:22 <b>moment (3)</b> 42:25;43:23,24 <b>money (6)</b> 25:22;29:7;37:20; 41:24;42:2;51:17 <b>months (1)</b> 25:21 <b>more (18)</b> 4:8;7:22;14:20; 19:10;23:11;26:19; 30:17;32:8;33:20; 40:25;42:16;44:8; 45:4;46:21;48:6,21; 49:6;58:4 <b>most (3)</b> 26:22;35:21,22 <b>move (2)</b> 22:2;55:20 <b>moving (2)</b> 33:16;57:18 <b>much (9)</b> 6:4;27:25;37:6; 41:10,11;42:2;57:12, 21;59:21 <b>Municipal (2)</b> 19:24;20:14 <b>must (2)</b> 6:20,21 <b>mute (1)</b> 43:8 <b>myself (2)</b> 53:13;59:13</p>	<p>3:21;10:5;15:12,13 <b>nature (3)</b> 45:23;46:11,17 <b>nearby (1)</b> 40:14 <b>nearly (1)</b> 25:17 <b>necessary (1)</b> 9:8 <b>need (29)</b> 4:18;6:13,15,23,24, 25;8:9,15,20,25;9:25; 10:1;13:21,24,25; 14:1,15;18:3,11;25:8, 15;28:16;29:14;30:8; 36:1;42:13;49:14; 57:15,17 <b>needed (4)</b> 10:3;20:15;46:13; 51:18 <b>negatives (1)</b> 53:19 <b>negotiation (1)</b> 16:2 <b>neighbors (1)</b> 33:6 <b>nervous (1)</b> 39:4 <b>new (10)</b> 20:11;25:8,15;26:1, 24;36:19,23,25;37:4; 51:8 <b>newer (1)</b> 37:10 <b>next (31)</b> 5:21;8:8;9:13;12:3, 6;13:6,18;14:6,20,21; 16:22,24;17:18;18:8; 19:3,16;20:2;22:6; 27:14;28:6,20;31:1; 32:22;37:13;38:1,19; 48:8;50:8;54:1,9; 55:11 <b>NextEra (8)</b> 19:20,20;20:5,12; 26:12;51:4;52:11; 54:16 <b>nicely (2)</b> 11:20;13:20 <b>Nichols (8)</b> 31:2,4,8,8;52:15,16, 19,20 <b>night (1)</b> 29:15 <b>nobody (1)</b> 58:2 <b>no-build (1)</b> 15:8 <b>noise (13)</b> 15:14;40:10,10,13, 25;41:7,10;42:11,14, 18,21;44:24;52:24 <b>noisiest (1)</b></p>	<p>40:23 <b>North (2)</b> 25:1;38:7 <b>note (3)</b> 7:11;58:24;59:4 <b>notice (9)</b> 5:6;10:21;14:24; 34:9,23,24;40:2;49:8; 58:16 <b>notification (2)</b> 33:23;35:9 <b>notified (1)</b> 33:20 <b>notify (1)</b> 34:2 <b>number (2)</b> 3:6;39:20 <b>numerous (1)</b> 21:23</p>
<b>O</b>				
				<p><b>objective (1)</b> 12:17 <b>obtain (1)</b> 5:7 <b>obviously (4)</b> 7:4;19:10;21:23; 59:18 <b>occasional (1)</b> 39:18 <b>October (2)</b> 9:5;25:18 <b>off (2)</b> 37:8;59:20 <b>offering (2)</b> 50:1;51:4 <b>office (1)</b> 56:12 <b>official (1)</b> 50:19 <b>officials (1)</b> 21:20 <b>often (1)</b> 40:24 <b>oil (2)</b> 32:9,10 <b>once (1)</b> 55:1 <b>one (13)</b> 3:4,24;14:7,20; 16:7;23:17;24:4; 28:15;31:13;38:1; 46:20,21;49:9 <b>ones (4)</b> 32:8;37:6;51:13,14 <b>ongoing (4)</b> 8:16;21:5;26:4; 55:13 <b>online (5)</b> 5:4;22:5;23:23; 49:11;58:13 <b>only (4)</b></p>

<p>18:9;27:21;49:2; 54:22 <b>open (5)</b> 18:10;28:8;31:3; 37:14;49:20 <b>operate (1)</b> 6:22 <b>operated (2)</b> 20:5,12 <b>operating (3)</b> 7:6;20:9;38:5 <b>operation (3)</b> 3:23;39:22;42:21 <b>operations (1)</b> 6:3 <b>OPERATOR (27)</b> 3:1;5:11;24:12,15; 27:14;28:6,20;31:1; 32:22;37:13;38:1,19; 43:10,15,19;48:8,21; 49:17,20;50:8;52:14; 54:1,9;56:21;57:8,24; 59:23 <b>opinion (1)</b> 42:3 <b>opportunities (4)</b> 20:24;25:9;26:24; 54:19 <b>opportunity (16)</b> 4:20;7:23;17:20; 18:25;24:10;27:12; 28:24;38:10;50:13; 51:5,21;54:13,15; 55:2,18;56:14 <b>optimistic (1)</b> 52:8 <b>orange (1)</b> 8:10 <b>order (2)</b> 6:21;7:25 <b>organic (1)</b> 45:23 <b>organically (1)</b> 46:17 <b>organizations (1)</b> 21:21 <b>organizer (1)</b> 28:10 <b>originally (2)</b> 16:16;20:6 <b>ourselves (1)</b> 27:2 <b>out (18)</b> 3:13;23:21;26:4,25; 27:23;28:15;29:2; 42:11;44:13;53:8; 58:6,8,18,23;59:1,8,9, 20 <b>outcome (1)</b> 12:25 <b>outreach (4)</b> 19:8;21:13,15,25 <b>outside (1)</b></p>	<p>16:3 <b>over (18)</b> 3:9;5:25;11:15; 16:12;17:4;18:25; 19:11;21:25;23:13; 24:12;33:15,17; 39:17;46:9;47:25; 52:23;55:7,11 <b>Overgaard (4)</b> 48:9,10,11,20 <b>O-V-E-R-G-A-A-R-D (1)</b> 48:11 <b>overview (4)</b> 19:5,6,17;22:7 <b>Owatonna (1)</b> 54:4 <b>own (3)</b> 33:1;36:18;50:19 <b>owned (6)</b> 19:18;20:5,6,9,12; 36:15 <b>owner (1)</b> 36:15 <b>Ozuna (4)</b> 27:16,18,19,19 <b>O-Z-U-N-A (1)</b> 27:19</p>	<p><b>partners (1)</b> 56:9 <b>pass (2)</b> 28:14;31:21 <b>passed (3)</b> 31:20,22;57:20 <b>past (1)</b> 33:11 <b>paths (1)</b> 22:14 <b>pathway (1)</b> 26:4 <b>patience (1)</b> 5:12 <b>pay (1)</b> 55:15 <b>paying (1)</b> 47:3 <b>payment (1)</b> 26:20 <b>payments (2)</b> 26:8;32:14 <b>people (13)</b> 8:14;23:25;34:3; 38:14;40:2,9,11; 48:24;51:20;52:3; 54:23;56:12;59:17 <b>people's (1)</b> 51:7 <b>perceived (1)</b> 40:14 <b>percent (2)</b> 25:18,19 <b>Perch (1)</b> 36:12 <b>perhaps (3)</b> 26:22;43:8,12 <b>period (3)</b> 7:12,21;8:16 <b>permanent (3)</b> 22:22,23;55:14 <b>permit (29)</b> 4:23;5:2,15;6:13, 18;7:3,6,9,13,17,20; 8:9;10:11;13:15; 14:19;16:1,9,11,13, 25;17:1,10,10,15,16; 22:8;56:17;59:7,8 <b>permits (4)</b> 4:19;6:20;9:25; 17:2 <b>permitting (1)</b> 4:18 <b>person (2)</b> 3:16;59:16 <b>perspective (1)</b> 42:18 <b>Peter (4)</b> 50:8,9,10,10 <b>P-E-T-E-R (1)</b> 50:11 <b>phone (1)</b> 7:14</p>	<p><b>piece (1)</b> 9:10 <b>pieces (1)</b> 11:4 <b>pipeline (1)</b> 25:25 <b>places (1)</b> 21:3 <b>plan (5)</b> 19:9,12,12;22:3,3 <b>plans (1)</b> 17:7 <b>plants (1)</b> 32:1 <b>playing (1)</b> 21:7 <b>please (34)</b> 3:8,10;12:3;13:6, 18;14:6,20;16:22; 17:18;24:7,21;27:16; 28:7,21;29:23;30:23; 31:2;32:23;37:14; 38:2,20;43:4,5;48:5, 9;49:18;50:9;52:15; 54:2,10;56:22;57:9, 25;59:12 <b>pm (2)</b> 59:3;60:2 <b>pocket (1)</b> 51:7 <b>point (7)</b> 26:15;41:16;45:25; 46:3,17;50:23;51:3 <b>policies (1)</b> 10:10 <b>portion (1)</b> 23:12 <b>positive (3)</b> 26:11,11;46:9 <b>possible (4)</b> 5:1;7:24;46:3,4 <b>potential (12)</b> 4:9,24,25;12:18; 14:2,13;16:18,19,20; 17:24;18:2;54:20 <b>pound (2)</b> 3:8;24:19 <b>Power (4)</b> 19:24,25;20:15; 53:21 <b>PPA (1)</b> 20:14 <b>practices (1)</b> 35:19 <b>predominantly (1)</b> 50:16 <b>prepped (1)</b> 36:19 <b>presence (1)</b> 56:11 <b>present (1)</b> 17:20 <b>presentation (5)</b></p>	<p>5:3;18:16;23:13; 36:13,14 <b>presented (1)</b> 22:4 <b>presenters (1)</b> 59:23 <b>presently (1)</b> 37:6 <b>presided (1)</b> 16:12 <b>press (4)</b> 3:5,8;24:17,19 <b>pretty (5)</b> 17:2;39:2;43:24; 57:12;58:25 <b>prevalent (1)</b> 35:22 <b>previous (2)</b> 33:11;34:8 <b>previously (2)</b> 20:14;36:15 <b>price (1)</b> 50:23 <b>primarily (1)</b> 8:20 <b>primed (1)</b> 55:9 <b>prior (2)</b> 8:22;36:15 <b>privilege (1)</b> 29:3 <b>probably (7)</b> 9:16,18;11:3;16:14; 34:22;45:17;47:8 <b>problem (1)</b> 48:2 <b>problems (3)</b> 31:11;39:18;42:5 <b>proceed (2)</b> 9:8;18:19 <b>proceeding (2)</b> 8:3;13:12 <b>Proceedings (1)</b> 60:2 <b>process (16)</b> 4:18;5:16;6:16,19; 7:9;8:9;9:3;11:24; 12:2,15;13:17;14:9; 15:25;16:10;17:23; 59:17 <b>processes (4)</b> 6:20;8:11;13:9,10 <b>produce (3)</b> 31:24;32:3;55:3 <b>producer (2)</b> 33:1,5 <b>producing (1)</b> 40:25 <b>professional (1)</b> 6:2 <b>programs (1)</b> 25:23 <b>progress (1)</b></p>
	<b>P</b>			
	<p><b>page (2)</b> 16:22;17:18 <b>pandemic (5)</b> 4:5;25:11,21;27:24; 55:8 <b>paper (1)</b> 34:9 <b>Papik (3)</b> 57:9,10,11 <b>P-A-P-I-K (1)</b> 57:11 <b>Pardon (1)</b> 34:18 <b>part (9)</b> 12:13;20:8;21:25; 27:20;29:7;36:19,22, 25;37:4 <b>participate (5)</b> 4:12;6:5;12:2;13:4; 59:17 <b>participated (1)</b> 49:4 <b>participating (4)</b> 21:6;47:15;58:21; 59:25 <b>participation (8)</b> 4:21;5:12;36:3; 46:22;47:6,13,18,20 <b>particular (6)</b> 12:25;13:1;15:24; 17:4;26:5;39:23 <b>particularly (2)</b> 12:14;26:10</p>			

<p>31:18 <b>project (119)</b> 3:15;4:9,10,17,22,25;5:20,21,23;6:7,22,25;7:5,19;10:8,25;12:11,19;13:21,22,25;14:4,9,17,18;15:2,6,7,8,9;16:18,24;17:4,13,21,23,25;18:3,4,24,25;19:4,6,7,18,23;20:3,5,15,18,23,25;21:4,6;22:1,2,10,12,13,16,18;23:3;25:5,5,16;26:5,10,17,18;27:3,5,21;28:17;29:3,10,11;33:7,10,25;34:3,5,10,13,24;35:8,10;36:16,19,23;37:4,19,23;38:16;40:7;45:24;46:7,13,18,19,24;47:6,14,15,16,19;48:13,17;49:8,25;50:6,17;52:9,11;54:6,19,20,22;55:20;56:8 <b>project-related (1)</b> 18:7 <b>projects (16)</b> 12:14,16,17,20;17:3,7;26:2;34:8,14;38:10;39:16,17;49:24;53:3;57:17;59:1 <b>project's (1)</b> 6:10 <b>promise (2)</b> 46:21;57:3 <b>properly (1)</b> 7:25 <b>property (1)</b> 32:16 <b>proposed (19)</b> 4:17;5:21;6:6;12:11,17;13:22,24,25;14:3,18;15:6,9;16:18;17:12;18:4;20:3;33:3;39:16;51:13 <b>proposing (1)</b> 42:20 <b>protection (1)</b> 17:7 <b>provide (20)</b> 3:4;4:9,13,16;6:21;11:7;19:8,13;20:15,23;22:6;24:11;26:23;29:13;42:18;44:2,6;47:11;48:13,14 <b>provided (8)</b> 14:25;17:1;23:9;29:5;34:8;40:12;44:17;54:18 <b>provides (1)</b> 44:4 <b>providing (4)</b></p>	<p>4:12,24;9:1;12:16 <b>provisions (1)</b> 51:13 <b>prudent (1)</b> 10:7 <b>public (27)</b> 3:3,5,13,17,18;4:8;5:10;6:1,4;7:21,22;8:1,22;9:9;10:4;11:11;13:4;14:13;15:17;16:11;19:1;22:7;27:7;43:14;44:23;59:9,15 <b>PUC (5)</b> 3:22;5:5;23:10;48:16;50:12 <b>PUC's (1)</b> 5:4 <b>pumps (1)</b> 29:7 <b>purchase (1)</b> 19:25 <b>purpose (1)</b> 12:10 <b>purposes (1)</b> 14:7 <b>purview (1)</b> 16:4 <b>put (10)</b> 5:2;11:11;32:9;33:12;41:6;42:4;45:17;50:1,3;51:18 <b>putting (1)</b> 52:6</p>	<p>10:20;11:5 <b>real (5)</b> 11:24;13:9;17:19;18:11;48:12 <b>realize (1)</b> 29:9 <b>really (18)</b> 10:25;11:20;18:24;25:8,15,16;26:15,19;27:6,25;45:24;53:19;55:5;56:7;58:3,8,22,23 <b>reason (1)</b> 7:2 <b>reasonable (1)</b> 10:6 <b>reasons (1)</b> 54:7 <b>receive (6)</b> 4:1;15:3;32:13,16;35:9;36:7 <b>recently (1)</b> 33:8 <b>reclaimed (1)</b> 22:25 <b>reclamation (1)</b> 23:5 <b>recognize (2)</b> 54:24;55:24 <b>record (6)</b> 8:21;23:24;24:5;30:9,24;59:11 <b>records (1)</b> 8:4 <b>recover (1)</b> 25:14 <b>recruit (1)</b> 26:14 <b>refer (1)</b> 5:5 <b>referenced (1)</b> 13:20 <b>referencing (2)</b> 36:9,11 <b>referendums (1)</b> 28:15 <b>referred (1)</b> 47:19 <b>referring (3)</b> 46:23;47:5,13 <b>regarding (1)</b> 4:9 <b>regardless (1)</b> 49:3 <b>regards (1)</b> 47:18 <b>region (1)</b> 26:11 <b>regularly (1)</b> 28:11 <b>regulating (1)</b> 3:20 <b>regulations (2)</b></p>	<p>6:9;10:10 <b>regulatory (1)</b> 13:23 <b>reiterate (4)</b> 12:24;30:23;49:1;58:3 <b>rejoins (1)</b> 43:23 <b>related (6)</b> 7:4,12;8:20;12:10;13:20;15:11 <b>relations (1)</b> 21:18 <b>relative (1)</b> 26:16 <b>relatively (2)</b> 25:20;26:1 <b>relevant (1)</b> 10:9 <b>reliability (1)</b> 10:2 <b>reliable (1)</b> 4:2 <b>relief (3)</b> 48:14;51:15;56:6 <b>reminder (2)</b> 6:19;59:2 <b>remotely (1)</b> 4:6 <b>removal (1)</b> 23:1 <b>removing (1)</b> 22:10 <b>renewable (3)</b> 19:22;31:14,19 <b>Renewables (2)</b> 20:9;36:15 <b>rent (1)</b> 32:14 <b>replace (1)</b> 50:21 <b>reply (1)</b> 6:16 <b>report (18)</b> 3:14;4:23;7:3;8:3,20,21;9:12,14,17;13:13,19;14:11,12,22;15:1,4,22;59:5 <b>reporter (4)</b> 23:22;24:6;29:16,24 <b>reporting (1)</b> 19:1 <b>reports (1)</b> 17:8 <b>represent (2)</b> 25:1;38:6 <b>require (2)</b> 10:3;22:19 <b>required (4)</b> 13:13;15:18;17:7;40:2 <b>requirements (5)</b></p>	<p>5:19;20:18;34:2;35:24,25 <b>requires (1)</b> 6:12 <b>requiring (1)</b> 13:10 <b>RES (3)</b> 20:6,9;36:15 <b>research (1)</b> 24:25 <b>resident (1)</b> 48:12 <b>residents (3)</b> 40:7,14;45:7 <b>resource (4)</b> 11:1;35:21;38:12,15 <b>resources (9)</b> 10:5,14;15:11,12,14;19:20,21;20:6,13 <b>respect (1)</b> 39:21 <b>respond (1)</b> 42:9 <b>responsibly (2)</b> 36:6;46:18 <b>restored (1)</b> 22:25 <b>retainer (1)</b> 42:12 <b>return (1)</b> 51:6 <b>revenue (3)</b> 26:9;50:18;51:24 <b>review (20)</b> 5:16,18,19;6:15,18;7:9,18;8:9,22;11:23,25;12:12,15;13:10,14,16,16;16:8;19:8;44:19 <b>reviewing (1)</b> 8:25 <b>revised (1)</b> 16:17 <b>revitalize (1)</b> 55:12 <b>Rich (6)</b> 42:24;43:2,6,12,18;44:7 <b>Richard (1)</b> 43:20 <b>right (13)</b> 30:10;33:2,10;34:22;37:18;41:8;42:1;46:10;47:8;50:4;57:13,15,19 <b>road (1)</b> 41:19 <b>roads (4)</b> 15:24;22:22;51:11;58:7 <b>Rock (13)</b> 3:15;20:4;21:20;</p>
	<b>Q</b>			
	<p><b>quality (1)</b> 15:11 <b>quarter (1)</b> 53:6 <b>quarterly (1)</b> 17:8 <b>queue (3)</b> 28:5;48:22;57:25 <b>quick (2)</b> 19:9;48:13 <b>quickly (2)</b> 11:24;17:19 <b>quite (1)</b> 46:23</p>			
	<b>R</b>			
	<p><b>raise (1)</b> 10:22 <b>ran (1)</b> 5:25 <b>rate (1)</b> 25:17 <b>reached (1)</b> 44:21 <b>read (2)</b></p>			

<p>29:9;31:16;48:12,15; 51:1,4;52:11;54:22; 55:2;56:19 <b>Rockers (3)</b> 54:2,3,4 <b>R-O-C-K-E-R-S (1)</b> 54:4 <b>role (2)</b> 11:24;21:7 <b>rules (3)</b> 6:9;10:9;24:2 <b>run (2)</b> 5:13;9:22 <b>Runke (3)</b> 38:2,3,4 <b>R-U-N-K-E (1)</b> 38:5 <b>running (1)</b> 9:23 <b>rural (3)</b> 29:7,13;59:1</p>	<p><b>separate (2)</b> 8:24;13:12 <b>September (1)</b> 9:21 <b>serve (1)</b> 31:12 <b>service (2)</b> 3:22;4:3 <b>set (3)</b> 11:19;24:4;49:7 <b>setback (1)</b> 35:24 <b>settlement (1)</b> 10:15 <b>seven (3)</b> 36:11,14,24 <b>seven-turbine (1)</b> 20:8 <b>several (1)</b> 53:2 <b>shadow (1)</b> 15:15 <b>share (1)</b> 50:13 <b>Short (1)</b> 48:17 <b>shown (1)</b> 7:9 <b>shows (2)</b> 6:18;8:8 <b>shut (2)</b> 36:20;55:8 <b>sight (1)</b> 42:4 <b>sign (2)</b> 34:10;59:20 <b>significant (1)</b> 51:6 <b>similar (1)</b> 17:2 <b>similar-size (1)</b> 15:7 <b>simply (2)</b> 3:5;24:17 <b>single (1)</b> 32:2 <b>Sioux (3)</b> 41:23,24;45:12 <b>sisters (1)</b> 38:8 <b>site (38)</b> 4:19,23;5:2;6:13, 18;7:3,9,13,17,20;8:9; 9:25;10:11;13:15; 14:19;16:1,8,11,13, 25;17:1,1,10,12,14, 16;18:4;19:9;20:11, 21;22:3,3,8;36:25; 46:2,5;59:6,8 <b>sited (5)</b> 6:14;33:25;36:5; 39:17,24 <b>siting (4)</b></p>	<p>15:25;35:20,23; 46:17 <b>six-figure (1)</b> 50:23 <b>size (1)</b> 6:24 <b>skepticism (1)</b> 52:7 <b>skilled (3)</b> 26:14;38:11;50:1 <b>skip (2)</b> 13:7;18:15 <b>slash (1)</b> 5:5 <b>slide (17)</b> 5:3;6:18;8:8;12:3, 6;13:6,18;14:6,20; 16:7;18:8;19:3,16; 20:2;22:6;23:6;49:6 <b>slides (3)</b> 5:14;16:14;23:17 <b>slip (1)</b> 55:7 <b>small (2)</b> 29:8;45:11 <b>snowy (1)</b> 58:7 <b>socioeconomic (2)</b> 10:6;26:12 <b>software (1)</b> 42:20 <b>solar (1)</b> 15:7 <b>sold (1)</b> 19:24 <b>solid (1)</b> 15:11 <b>somebody (2)</b> 46:22;48:1 <b>somehow (4)</b> 46:25;47:2,22,23 <b>sometime (1)</b> 9:21 <b>sometimes (1)</b> 39:20 <b>soon (1)</b> 18:11 <b>sorry (8)</b> 12:4;29:19;30:5,22; 34:17;42:8;43:13; 47:24 <b>sort (3)</b> 12:1;18:6;40:22 <b>sound (7)</b> 42:23,24;43:25; 52:17;53:8;56:25; 57:3 <b>sounds (1)</b> 34:5 <b>source (1)</b> 38:12 <b>sources (1)</b> 4:15</p>	<p><b>South (14)</b> 33:1,5,18;34:6; 38:7;41:19,22;42:3; 45:7;46:10,16;53:1,3; 55:6 <b>southern (1)</b> 28:12 <b>southwest (1)</b> 25:3 <b>southwestern (1)</b> 25:7 <b>speak (3)</b> 5:9;28:24;43:23 <b>speaker (1)</b> 24:4 <b>speakers' (1)</b> 43:12 <b>speaking (2)</b> 5:11;56:16 <b>special (2)</b> 17:3,5 <b>specific (2)</b> 10:24;45:24 <b>specifically (4)</b> 16:5;21:21;42:16; 44:1 <b>speed (3)</b> 32:4,11;53:23 <b>spell (4)</b> 29:16,24;30:24; 43:4 <b>spelled (2)</b> 38:4;57:11 <b>spelling (1)</b> 24:7 <b>spend (3)</b> 7:10;42:2;55:15 <b>spending (1)</b> 41:24 <b>spent (1)</b> 51:7 <b>spinning (1)</b> 36:10 <b>spread (1)</b> 4:7 <b>Springs (1)</b> 41:25 <b>stability (1)</b> 41:13 <b>stable (1)</b> 25:21 <b>staff (4)</b> 3:15,20;5:10;17:1 <b>stage (1)</b> 8:15 <b>staged (1)</b> 22:15 <b>stakeholder (3)</b> 19:8;21:12,25 <b>standard (1)</b> 17:6 <b>standards (5)</b> 40:15,17;42:14;</p>	<p>43:24;44:2 <b>Standing (1)</b> 53:7 <b>star (2)</b> 3:5;24:17 <b>start (1)</b> 26:21 <b>state (22)</b> 10:10;21:9;25:22; 26:24;28:2,22;31:12, 19;32:13;33:2,5;35:5, 24;38:14;43:25;44:1, 18;46:2,19;52:23; 53:4;55:6 <b>stated (3)</b> 14:15;18:3;37:2 <b>statements (1)</b> 38:9 <b>States (1)</b> 54:23 <b>state's (2)</b> 4:17;42:11 <b>statewide (1)</b> 25:16 <b>static (1)</b> 51:1 <b>stating (1)</b> 24:6 <b>stay (2)</b> 30:11;51:1 <b>STEINAHUER (1)</b> 43:3 <b>Steinhauer (58)</b> 5:17;11:16,18,21; 12:5,8;23:15,19; 27:10;28:4,19;29:18, 23;30:2,5,8,12,18,21; 31:6;32:21;33:21,22; 34:17,21;35:3,4,7,18; 37:25;38:18,22; 39:12,13;40:19; 41:14,20;42:7;43:1,7, 17;44:15,16;45:1; 48:4,19,23;49:19; 50:7;52:13,18;53:25; 54:8;56:20;57:7,22; 58:1;59:22 <b>S-T-E-I-N-H-A-U-E-R (1)</b> 35:5 <b>step (1)</b> 16:24 <b>steps (2)</b> 26:17;27:7 <b>still (6)</b> 25:14,17;29:20; 40:17;44:23;58:7 <b>stimulus (2)</b> 26:24;55:9 <b>stoplights (1)</b> 53:15 <b>strategies (3)</b> 14:5;16:19;18:1 <b>Street (2)</b></p>
<b>S</b>				
<p><b>safe (4)</b> 4:1;39:6;40:15,16 <b>safely (2)</b> 4:7;7:7 <b>safety (1)</b> 15:18 <b>sample (1)</b> 17:1 <b>savings (1)</b> 33:16 <b>saying (1)</b> 44:14 <b>school (2)</b> 28:14;56:5 <b>schools (2)</b> 53:4;55:17 <b>science (1)</b> 44:8 <b>scope (1)</b> 14:10 <b>scoping (9)</b> 3:3,14;4:22;9:10, 10;14:11;15:1;16:6; 19:2 <b>secure (2)</b> 10:17;55:23 <b>seeing (4)</b> 39:22;42:4;57:4; 59:5 <b>seems (1)</b> 33:15 <b>senator (1)</b> 31:12 <b>send (2)</b> 45:3;48:5 <b>sense (2)</b> 52:2;59:10 <b>sent (2)</b> 8:6;42:11</p>				

<p>51:8;56:12 <b>streetlights (1)</b> 53:16 <b>stress (1)</b> 49:13 <b>strongly (3)</b> 29:11;49:25;50:5 <b>struck (1)</b> 32:10 <b>structured (1)</b> 13:11 <b>structures (2)</b> 40:3,5 <b>struggling (1)</b> 29:8 <b>stuck (1)</b> 45:13 <b>studied (1)</b> 14:14 <b>study (1)</b> 39:15 <b>stuff (2)</b> 45:13;47:7 <b>stupid (1)</b> 47:25 <b>S-U (1)</b> 34:25 <b>submitted (1)</b> 16:17 <b>subsequent (1)</b> 46:4 <b>subsequently (1)</b> 36:20 <b>subsided (1)</b> 25:25 <b>subsidiary (1)</b> 19:20 <b>substation (1)</b> 40:8 <b>success (1)</b> 32:18 <b>successful (2)</b> 31:11;51:25 <b>successfully (1)</b> 50:18 <b>succinct (1)</b> 11:1 <b>suffered (1)</b> 55:5 <b>summer (1)</b> 22:9 <b>sun (1)</b> 19:22 <b>supervisor (1)</b> 50:15 <b>supplant (1)</b> 56:4 <b>supply (2)</b> 10:2,17 <b>support (10)</b> 20:16;25:4;28:17; 38:16;46:12;49:25; 50:5;52:11;54:5;</p>	<p>55:12 <b>sure (11)</b> 13:2;24:10;30:9; 34:12;35:2,3,8;36:5; 39:24;41:2;44:20 <b>surrounding (2)</b> 36:2;51:20 <b>Suzanne (70)</b> 5:17;8:18;11:16,17, 18,21;12:5,8;18:17; 23:14,15,19;27:10; 28:4,19;29:18,23; 30:2,5,8,12,18,21; 31:6;32:21;33:21,22; 34:17,21,25;35:3,4,7, 14,18;37:25;38:18, 22;39:12,13;40:19; 41:14,20;42:7,22; 43:1,3,7,17,22;44:15, 16;45:1,21;48:4,19, 23;49:19;50:7;52:13, 18;53:25;54:8;56:20; 57:7,22;58:1,20; 59:13,22 <b>S-U-Z-A-N-N-E (1)</b> 35:4 <b>sweet (1)</b> 48:17 <b>swiftly (1)</b> 56:17 <b>swishing (1)</b> 53:8 <b>system (7)</b> 6:8;7:1;10:3;11:2; 13:22,22;15:6</p>	<p>50:24,25;51:5,15,16; 54:7;56:2,3,5,5 <b>taxes (5)</b> 15:16;32:16;41:22; 45:11;51:19 <b>team (2)</b> 21:18,19 <b>technical (1)</b> 12:13 <b>telecommunications (2)</b> 3:22;4:3 <b>telephone (2)</b> 3:6;24:17 <b>temporary (3)</b> 20:24;22:15;23:2 <b>tend (2)</b> 17:2,9 <b>tens (1)</b> 25:5 <b>term (1)</b> 13:23 <b>terms (9)</b> 7:1;9:24;23:4; 25:12;26:16;31:12, 12;37:2;42:21 <b>testified (1)</b> 53:2 <b>testimony (1)</b> 3:4 <b>Thanks (10)</b> 11:18,19;18:21; 23:15,21,22;29:18; 30:20;43:1;59:21 <b>That'll (1)</b> 5:16 <b>Third (1)</b> 5:20 <b>though (1)</b> 58:6 <b>thought (2)</b> 47:21;52:6 <b>thoughts (2)</b> 50:13;52:6 <b>thousands (1)</b> 32:3 <b>three (1)</b> 58:12 <b>thus (1)</b> 19:8 <b>tied (1)</b> 21:8 <b>timeline (3)</b> 9:3;19:7;21:1 <b>times (2)</b> 28:14;53:2 <b>time's (1)</b> 45:5 <b>timing (1)</b> 6:25 <b>today (3)</b> 9:9;58:12,25 <b>today's (1)</b> 59:24</p>	<p><b>together (3)</b> 8:13;37:18;52:6 <b>toggle (1)</b> 49:12 <b>Tom (1)</b> 30:1 <b>tonight (17)</b> 3:25;4:13;7:15,23; 15:3;17:22;18:9,25; 23:17,21,24;24:9; 29:10;49:1,4;58:6,22 <b>tonight's (3)</b> 5:3;12:10;19:14 <b>took (1)</b> 21:25 <b>top (4)</b> 36:13;37:9;53:17; 57:1 <b>topic (1)</b> 28:25 <b>total (1)</b> 20:20 <b>totally (1)</b> 32:10 <b>toting (1)</b> 50:22 <b>tour (1)</b> 53:9 <b>towers (2)</b> 39:8;50:17 <b>town (2)</b> 45:11;51:9 <b>towns (1)</b> 29:8 <b>Township (3)</b> 50:16,19;56:5 <b>townships (1)</b> 32:17 <b>tractors (1)</b> 51:8 <b>trades (1)</b> 37:18 <b>transmission (3)</b> 10:18;15:19;33:14 <b>transparent (1)</b> 6:3 <b>transportation (2)</b> 15:17;40:4 <b>travel (1)</b> 22:14 <b>trees (1)</b> 22:10 <b>tribal (1)</b> 21:18 <b>tribes (1)</b> 21:17 <b>tried (1)</b> 46:2 <b>tries (1)</b> 14:4 <b>trust (1)</b> 52:2 <b>try (11)</b></p>	<p>6:2,3;8:12;11:23; 12:22;13:1;17:22; 24:8;33:22;45:3;58:4 <b>trying (3)</b> 14:8;41:9,10 <b>Tuesday (3)</b> 18:12;58:12;59:3 <b>turbine (11)</b> 15:15;22:18,23; 31:10;32:8,9;52:21; 53:5,7,11,20 <b>turbines (39)</b> 15:24;20:19,20,20; 32:15;33:3,11;34:1; 35:12,13,20,23;36:5, 7,8,9,11,14,16,18,19, 24;37:9,10,17;39:3, 23;40:23;42:19;45:8; 46:2,5,18;47:2;50:2; 52:22;53:17;56:3; 57:1 <b>turn (6)</b> 3:9;11:15;23:13; 24:12;47:25;52:3 <b>turning (3)</b> 5:22;33:13;35:12 <b>turnout (1)</b> 58:25 <b>twice (1)</b> 25:17 <b>Twin (1)</b> 32:5 <b>two (11)</b> 6:19,20,20;8:11; 13:8,10;16:14;29:4; 31:12,12;48:24 <b>two- (1)</b> 26:21 <b>type (1)</b> 6:24 <b>types (1)</b> 40:9 <b>typically (2)</b> 40:9,22 <b>typo (1)</b> 9:13</p>
	<b>T</b>			
	<p><b>tag (1)</b> 50:23 <b>talk (10)</b> 4:14;5:16,19;6:17; 33:24;35:11;46:22; 48:1;56:13;59:14 <b>talked (2)</b> 33:6;51:17 <b>talking (2)</b> 3:25;10:12 <b>talks (1)</b> 10:23 <b>tall (1)</b> 40:3 <b>taller (3)</b> 37:6,7,9 <b>Tara (7)</b> 37:13,15,15;56:22, 22,23,23 <b>T-A-R-A (2)</b> 37:16;56:23 <b>targeted (1)</b> 21:21 <b>tax (13)</b> 26:8;45:10;48:14;</p>			
			<b>U</b>	
			<p><b>ultimate (1)</b> 12:23 <b>ultimately (1)</b> 26:25 <b>unavoidable (1)</b> 16:21 <b>unemployment (2)</b> 25:17,23 <b>unfortunately (1)</b> 45:23 <b>Union (9)</b> 24:25;27:21,22; 28:2,11;29:1;38:9; 50:1;54:5</p>	



<p><b>unions (1)</b> 26:14 <b>unique (4)</b> 14:16;15:13;17:12; 18:4 <b>unit (3)</b> 3:16;5:18;8:24 <b>United (1)</b> 54:23 <b>up (24)</b> 11:20;18:11;20:23; 24:4;26:1;29:9,10; 30:11,13;32:9;33:3, 12;34:10;41:6;42:4; 45:17;46:11;48:25; 49:7;50:2,3;51:13,20; 57:1 <b>updated (1)</b> 16:17 <b>urge (1)</b> 56:17 <b>usage (1)</b> 21:2 <b>use (2)</b> 10:16;58:13 <b>used (2)</b> 4:18;22:18 <b>using (1)</b> 33:14 <b>Utilities (4)</b> 3:17,21;6:1;22:8 <b>utilize (1)</b> 26:14 <b>utilizing (1)</b> 37:3</p>	<p>59:9 <b>visual (1)</b> 15:14 <b>vital (1)</b> 26:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>W</b></p> <p><b>wages (1)</b> 50:5 <b>waiting (1)</b> 49:1 <b>Walleye (32)</b> 3:3,15;5:22;6:6; 17:20;18:16,24; 19:18,19,23;20:10,13; 21:12;23:8;25:4;26:2, 19,23;27:3;33:24; 35:11,15;36:23;37:1; 40:12;44:17;45:20; 47:11,16;48:16;49:9; 52:11 <b>Walleye's (2)</b> 42:18;44:21 <b>wants (1)</b> 33:24 <b>wastes (1)</b> 15:12 <b>watched (1)</b> 50:20 <b>water (1)</b> 15:11 <b>waves (1)</b> 39:8 <b>way (8)</b> 13:5,11;14:2;24:4; 40:6;41:11;50:18; 57:1 <b>ways (5)</b> 14:15;18:2,13; 25:14,20 <b>wear (1)</b> 50:14 <b>weather (1)</b> 40:24 <b>Webex (1)</b> 24:4 <b>website (9)</b> 5:4,7;10:25;14:23; 22:5;23:10;34:9;49:7; 58:15 <b>weeks (1)</b> 58:12 <b>WEICH (18)</b> 18:17,18,22,23; 35:14,15,19;37:7,12; 42:22;43:2,6,21; 45:19,20;47:9,10; 48:2 <b>W-E-I-C-H (2)</b> 35:16;45:21 <b>weigh (1)</b> 7:15</p>	<p><b>weighing (1)</b> 26:16 <b>welcome (3)</b> 3:2;11:5;30:4 <b>weren't (1)</b> 33:19 <b>western (1)</b> 29:3 <b>what's (2)</b> 36:7;51:10 <b>who'd (1)</b> 27:12 <b>whole (1)</b> 7:18 <b>wholly-owned (1)</b> 19:19 <b>who's (1)</b> 59:16 <b>widespread (1)</b> 25:13 <b>wildlife (2)</b> 15:13;21:18 <b>Willard (16)</b> 38:20,21,24,25; 39:13;40:16;41:2,15, 21;43:15,16;44:10, 25;45:5;46:20;47:21 <b>W-I-L-L-A-R-D (1)</b> 38:25 <b>willing (2)</b> 36:1,6 <b>Wind (63)</b> 3:3,15;4:19;5:22; 6:6,7,9;15:8;18:24; 19:18,19,22,23;20:5, 10,13;21:9,12;23:8; 25:4;26:2,19,23;27:3; 29:3,11;31:10,15; 32:3,7,9,15;33:7,24; 35:15,20,22;36:5,8, 12,23;37:1,17;39:2, 17;40:12;41:1;44:17; 45:8,20;46:24;47:11, 16;48:17;49:9,24; 50:2;52:11,22;53:20; 56:3;57:1 <b>Windmills (2)</b> 6:10;51:24 <b>wish (1)</b> 24:16 <b>withdraw (2)</b> 3:7;24:18 <b>within (9)</b> 5:2;9:17;14:16; 22:11,12,16;33:3; 34:4;55:11 <b>without (1)</b> 31:11 <b>witness (1)</b> 19:9 <b>wonderful (1)</b> 55:18 <b>wondering (3)</b></p>	<p>33:8;39:5,5 <b>words (1)</b> 51:12 <b>work (11)</b> 23:3;25:25;26:13; 27:5,25;28:12;29:12; 37:18;40:3;54:16; 56:15 <b>worked (1)</b> 31:21 <b>worker (1)</b> 50:4 <b>workers (13)</b> 25:2,8,24;26:4,15, 18;27:22;28:13; 41:23;46:11;50:1; 55:10,14 <b>workforce (1)</b> 38:11 <b>working (10)</b> 8:25;25:24;26:21; 28:14;29:3;52:3; 55:20,21;57:1,5 <b>world's (1)</b> 19:21 <b>worried (1)</b> 56:25 <b>write (1)</b> 8:3 <b>writing (1)</b> 4:13 <b>written (3)</b> 18:11;49:3;58:10</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Y</b></p> <p><b>yard (3)</b> 50:21,21;53:8 <b>year (4)</b> 5:21;32:14;54:16; 55:11 <b>years (9)</b> 29:4;31:22;37:17; 39:18;49:23,25; 50:19;52:22;53:12 <b>Yep (5)</b> 23:18;35:2,14,18; 43:16 <b>young (1)</b> 55:21</p>	<p><b>12,000 (1)</b> 25:2 <b>120 (1)</b> 58:24 <b>14,000 (1)</b> 38:6 <b>15 (3)</b> 31:24;52:22;53:12 <b>1500 (1)</b> 53:5 <b>1991 (1)</b> 31:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p> <p><b>2.3 (1)</b> 20:19 <b>2.82 (1)</b> 20:19 <b>2.9 (1)</b> 25:19 <b>20 (1)</b> 39:18 <b>200 (3)</b> 20:23;46:11;55:10 <b>2007 (1)</b> 31:24 <b>2019 (2)</b> 20:10;22:1 <b>2020 (3)</b> 25:18,18,19 <b>2021 (3)</b> 9:9,19;22:9 <b>21 (1)</b> 9:15 <b>23 (1)</b> 33:13 <b>24 (1)</b> 49:23 <b>240 (1)</b> 54:23 <b>26 (1)</b> 7:13 <b>26th (5)</b> 18:13;49:5,14; 58:11;59:3</p>
<b>V</b>				<b>3</b>
<p><b>vaccine (1)</b> 25:13 <b>Valley (1)</b> 41:25 <b>value (1)</b> 4:11 <b>vegetation (2)</b> 15:13;22:11 <b>vehicles (1)</b> 22:17 <b>verbal (2)</b> 18:10;49:2 <b>vet (1)</b> 44:19 <b>vetting (1)</b> 40:13 <b>via (2)</b> 7:14;22:4 <b>vibration (1)</b> 41:11 <b>vicinity (2)</b> 36:24;37:3 <b>view (2)</b> 38:9;41:16 <b>virtually (1)</b></p>			<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <p><b>1 (2)</b> 3:6;24:17 <b>10 (1)</b> 22:20 <b>109-megawatt (1)</b> 6:7 <b>11 (2)</b> 20:7;36:17 <b>12 (1)</b> 55:14</p>	<p><b>3,000 (1)</b> 52:23 <b>30 (1)</b> 50:19 <b>300 (1)</b> 52:22 <b>30-year (1)</b> 50:15 <b>36 (1)</b> 20:18</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <p><b>4.6 (1)</b></p>

25:18 <b>4:30 (1)</b> 59:3 <b>40 (1)</b> 20:20 <b>40-turbine (1)</b> 36:25 <b>49 (1)</b> 38:5				
<b>5</b>				
<b>5 (1)</b> 9:9 <b>5.6 (1)</b> 31:25 <b>50 (3)</b> 3:19;6:11;22:21 <b>55 (1)</b> 22:21 <b>563 (4)</b> 27:20;29:2;37:16; 49:24				
<b>6</b>				
<b>60 (1)</b> 9:18				
<b>7</b>				
<b>7:18 (1)</b> 60:2				
<b>8</b>				
<b>8 (1)</b> 22:20				
<b>9</b>				
<b>91 (1)</b> 31:21				