

**Application to the North Dakota Public Service
Commission for a Certificate of Site
Compatibility**

**Northern Divide Wind Energy Center
Northern Divide Wind, LLC
Burke County, North Dakota**

Prepared for:

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Approximately 200 to 300 temporary construction workers are expected to be required for the approximately six-month construction period. It is likely that general skilled labor is available either in the county or the state to serve the basic infrastructure and site development needs. Specialized labor will be required for certain components of wind farm development. It is likely that this labor will be imported from other areas of the state or from other states, as the relatively short duration of construction does not warrant special training of local or regional labor. Balancing the use of local contractors and imported specialized contractors will likely alleviate any labor relations issues.

No effects on permanent housing are anticipated. During construction, out-of-town laborers will likely use lodging facilities in and around the city of Tioga, Kenmare, or Crosby. The Project will create approximately five to seven full-time O&M jobs. Most of these employees are expected to reside locally. Sufficient permanent housing is available within Burke County to accommodate these new employees.

Long-term beneficial impacts to the Burke and Mountrail Counties' tax base as a result of the construction and operation of the Project and Project Transmission Line will contribute to improving the local economy in this area of North Dakota. The development of wind energy in this region has been important in diversifying and strengthening the economic base of North Dakota. In addition, establishing the central region of North Dakota as an important producer of renewable energy, such as wind, has spurred the development of wind-related businesses in the area and contributes to the economic growth in the region; there are four wind energy-related manufacturing facilities in North Dakota (AWEA 2019).

5.1.3 Mitigative Measures

Socioeconomic impacts will be primarily positive, with an influx of wages and expenditures made at local businesses during construction and an increase in the counties' tax base due to construction and operation of the wind turbines and associated infrastructure. In addition, the lease payments paid to landowners will diversify the revenue stream for farmers and ranchers.

5.2 Land Use and Vegetation

5.2.1 Description of Resources

The Project Area is located in rural North Dakota in an area predominantly comprised of cultivated land, hayfields, pasturelands, and grasslands. Accordingly, much of the Project Area is utilized for agricultural purposes supporting both livestock grazing and crops, and most of the Project Area has been converted to wheat, canola, and other commercial crops. The Project Area is not within any city limits or within an area of any known military installments. All facilities are on private land except where underground collection and communication cables cross public road rights-of-way. Wooded areas within the Project Area are limited to shelterbelts between fields, windbreaks surrounding farmsteads, along drainages, and near wetlands.

A desktop land use classification was completed using current and historical Google Earth aerial imagery (Google Earth 2019) and North Dakota statewide historical imagery from 1957-1962, 1995-1998, 2003-2006, 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2014-2018 (ND GIS Hub 2019). Parcels of land were classified based on features such as rock piles indicating extensive mechanized rock clearing; presence and amount of trees and shrubs; field edge changes; absence of scattered rocks; straight line features indicating plowing, disking, harvesting, or planting; or any other features indicating human disturbance. Land use was grouped into six different categories and each category was defined as follows:

1. Cropland: parcels of land that are currently being used for agricultural crop production.
2. Broken Grassland: grassland where the soil has been historically disturbed by tilling, construction, or other mechanical methods.
3. Unbroken Grassland: grassland where the soil has not been disturbed by tilling, construction, or other mechanical methods. Native prairie is considered unbroken grassland. Areas used as pasture and hayland that have not been historically broken (e.g., cultivated or extensive mechanized rock clearing) are also considered unbroken grassland.
4. Tree Row: deliberately planted tree rows.