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SCOPING AND INFORMATIONAL MEETING - 16-289 17-597
WILMONT - FEBRUARY 28, 2018 - 6:00 P.M.
BEFORE THE MINNESOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
AND DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

In the Matter of the Applications of Nobles 2 Power Partners, LLC for a Certificate of Need and Site Permit Application for the Nobles 2 Wind Project in Nobles County

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Wilmont, Minnesota

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COURT REPORTER: Janet Shaddix Elling, RPR

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1 MR. DAVID BIRKHOLZ: My name is David
2 Birkholz and I'm welcoming you here to the public
3 information meeting for the Nobles 2 Wind Project
4 site permit review. And that's why we're here,
5 we're from the state, and my colleagues will
6 introduce themselves. Again, I'm with the
7 Department of Commerce, Energy Environmental Review
8 and Analysis. And so we're one section of that.
9 Again, my colleague will explain that more as we go.

10 I'm just up here to take a quick minute
11 to thank you for coming out and to not bypass the
12 fact that we didn't do the first notice correctly.
13 And I understand that some people were here on the
14 15th, and we had to change that because we had to
15 meet the state laws for how the notice is going, but
16 it didn't get carried out, that the notice was sent
17 to all the people to not show up to that meeting.

18 So I don't want to let that go by without
19 actually apologizing for that, for those of you who
20 came out that night. But I'm real pleased that this
21 crowd has showed up tonight, and I'm going to get
22 that on the table and let the -- let the rest of the
23 evening progress.

24 We're going to have some introductions
25 and some information about the project and then the

1 night will be about getting your comments that we
2 can take back.

3 So thank you very much. I'll turn this
4 over to Mike Kaluzniak, or Michael Kaluzniak, of the
5 Public Utilities Commission.

6 MR. MIKE KALUZNIAK: Thank you, David.

7 Good evening, everybody. Michael
8 Kaluzniak, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. I
9 hope you don't mind if I don't use this podium down
10 here, I probably project a little better on my feet.

11 I'll be really brief tonight. There are
12 copies of this presentation. If you're anything
13 like my family, you probably won't find this as
14 interesting as I do. But we'll briefly run through
15 the overview of the certificate of need and site
16 permit application processes.

17 The Department of Commerce, our sister
18 agency that helps with the environmental review as
19 well as some of the administrative stuff for
20 processing these applications will explain their
21 work on the draft site permit and the environmental
22 report for the project. Nobles 2 Power Partners,
23 Tenaska, will be here to talk about the project
24 information and, lastly and most importantly, we
25 want feedback from you, answering your questions, we

1 want to hear your concerns for the draft site permit
2 and the environmental report.

3 This is some background on the project
4 itself. There's copies of this map in the back as
5 well. There are two things that the Applicant will
6 need from the Commission to build the project.

7 I should mention, the Commission is a
8 five-member body. I'm a staff person, not a
9 commissioner. They work under the open meeting laws
10 so they don't make decisions behind closed doors, we
11 have all our meetings in public. We build a record
12 on our website for your review, all of these
13 documents are there forever, so if you ever need any
14 of those, feel free to contact us or look around for
15 the materials online if you have questions or would
16 like to find something.

17 Again, two things that they need to
18 obtain from the Commission are a certificate of need
19 and a site permit. Generally speaking, a
20 certificate of need is a determination of need,
21 whether the project is needed and in the public's
22 best interest and ratepayers' interest, whether it
23 makes sense electrically and so forth, as well as
24 determining the size, type, and timing of the
25 project itself.

1 Secondly, a site permit application is a
2 document that authorizes the project itself. It
3 includes a lot of descriptions about the project
4 boundaries and permit conditions and so forth. And
5 there are copies of a template document in the back
6 that you may want to take home with you that
7 identify some of the typical types of permits that
8 we look at. And if you have ideas about what should
9 be there in terms of permit conditions, let us know,
10 we have forms back there as well, Charley can point
11 those out to you. Charley Bruce, in the white shirt
12 back there, is our public advisor, his job is to
13 help you participate in the project.

14 So the purpose of the meeting again is to
15 collect information from the public for the
16 environmental report for the certificate of need and
17 preparation for a draft site permit. This is a long
18 algorithm flow chart, I won't go through it, you're
19 welcome to take it home and read it. If you have
20 any questions while I'm here I'm happy to try to
21 answer, I won't bore everybody with that, but these
22 are the statutes and rules and process.

23 Basically, an application is reviewed by
24 the Commission. It undergoes a draft site permit
25 development. This is simply where the site permit

1 is developed. There are public hearings. We'll be
2 back here probably several months from now with a
3 draft site permit and comments for review, as well
4 as a draft -- or an environmental report for
5 analysis, and have a public hearing with an
6 administrative law judge and take comments on those
7 things as well before the Commission makes its
8 decision.

9 I've added this slide because this
10 project has that certificate of need component and
11 not all wind projects do. It's fairly
12 straightforward, there's an application review
13 again. You see it splits off into two separate
14 tracks. There's a comment and reply period on the
15 merits of the certificate of need application, and
16 there should be copies around here for you as well
17 to review.

18 Then there will be a joint public hearing
19 with the site permit. Again, an administrative law
20 judge report comes to the Commission and the
21 Commission will make a decision based on the record
22 that we develop here.

23 Some language about the state's policy on
24 protection and how we make our decisions. These are
25 some of the things that we would look at when we

1 would look at permit conditions like we're required
2 to do.

3 These are the questions that are from the
4 notice itself. If you take nothing else home with
5 you today, remember the date March 20th, that's when
6 your comments are due initially. It's better to
7 have your comments early in the process than later.
8 We'll have a draft site permit issued and have that
9 available for review as well, but if you get your
10 comments in earlier we have more time to consider
11 them and it's easier for everybody to get them into
12 the project if they're appropriate.

13 Different ways to submit comments. The
14 comments should go to David Birkholz at the
15 Department of Commerce. Here's his address and
16 contact information. That's me, that's Charley.
17 This is David and Jamie. Scott and Jeremy are from
18 the project and they will tell you more.

19 And thank you very much, appreciate you
20 coming out.

21 MR. SCOTT SEIER: All right. Good
22 evening, everybody. While Jeremy is switching over
23 on the presentations, I'll just start off first off
24 by thanking everybody for joining us here this
25 evening and extend my apologies for the meeting that

1 was rescheduled from the 15th to tonight. Mike,
2 David, Jamie, thank you as well, and Charley.

3 Thank you as well for coming out this
4 evening. We're very happy to have this opportunity
5 here to share with you more information about
6 Tenaska as well as the Nobles 2 Power Project.

7 My name again is Scott Seier, I'm a vice
8 president with Tenaska's strategic development and
9 acquisitions group. I have several members of the
10 Nobles 2 team here with me. Joe Penatara (phonetic)
11 from our environmental services is here to my right.
12 Jeremy Duehr, our project counsel. I have Kimberly
13 Ross from our public affairs group. From PRC Wind,
14 our development partners, Jay Ranier (phonetic)
15 Brian Amerman (phonetic) and Eric Hanson -- there he
16 is, Eric Hanson from Westwood. Westwood has been
17 heavily involved in a number of the environmental
18 studies of the project as well as preparation of the
19 site permit application. So feel free to grab any
20 of us for any questions or anything that you may
21 have for us.

22 This evening I'm going to share a bit of
23 information about Tenaska as well as information
24 about the Nobles 2 project. I do want to start off
25 just by perhaps explaining a bit about the

1 relationship between Tenaska and Nobles 2.

2 Tenaska, the company that I work for, is
3 the owner of the Nobles 2 project, Nobles 2 Power
4 Partners. You may hear me refer to that project as
5 either Nobles 2 or the Nobles 2 Wind Project.

6 For clarity, Nobles 2 is the company that
7 owns the -- that owns the -- that will own the
8 project assets itself, it's the Applicant for the
9 site permit, it's the Applicant for the certificate
10 of need, and it's the entity that holds the leases
11 and wind easements that we have with our landowners.

12 Here's some basic information about
13 Tenaska. The company was founded in 1987. We're
14 based in Omaha, Nebraska. We have grown from a
15 small power plant developer to a leader in power
16 generation and energy marketing. Today we're one of
17 the largest private independent energy companies in
18 the United States. We have established ourselves as
19 a leader in the development, design, financing,
20 construction, ownership, and operation of natural
21 gas fueled and renewable energy power plants. We
22 have developed approximately 10,000 megawatts of
23 power generating facilities, that's roughly 17 power
24 plants, I believe, and we currently manage
25 operations for 6,800 megawatts of facilities in six

1 states.

2 The next slide I have, this is a map of
3 Tenaska's reach here throughout the United States.
4 As you can see, we have power plants and office
5 locations scattered throughout the United States and
6 up in Canada as well. Our headquarters are down in
7 Omaha, Nebraska.

8 A bit more here about Tenaska as well.
9 We're a midwestern company, we have midwestern
10 values. Our employees are known for hard work,
11 integrity, and fair and ethical dealing. We strive
12 to cultivate long-term relationships with local
13 leaders and residents. We try to build those on
14 respect, value, and trust. We have a reputation and
15 track record for operating safe, efficient, and
16 environmentally responsible power plants. We also
17 want to be a good business neighbor in the
18 communities where our facilities are located. Our
19 plants are known to generate tax revenue, provide
20 jobs, and have a history of working with local
21 businesses and provide support for local community
22 programs.

23 So I hope that gives you at least a brief
24 snapshot of who Tenaska is and what we try to do
25 when we come into communities like the Wilmont

1 community here.

2 I want to now move to share information
3 about the Nobles 2 Wind Project. Again, this is a
4 project that is being developed by Tenaska. The
5 development actually started roughly three years ago
6 by the folks from PRC Wind. We acquired the project
7 from them in September of 2016 and we, along with
8 the ongoing assistance of the PRC Wind folks, we
9 have been steadily advancing the development of the
10 project since then.

11 As proposed, the project is expected to
12 be up to a 260 megawatt facility. And from a
13 timeline perspective, we may start construction as
14 early as later here in 2018, but we expect the
15 majority of the construction will be in 2019 with
16 the target of being on line by the end of 2019. It
17 is also notable that the facility has a long-term 20
18 year Power Purchase Agreement with Minnesota Power,
19 where they will buy up all of the energy produced by
20 the facility.

21 The next slide.

22 This is a simple map showing the project
23 boundary in the project area. This is similar to
24 the map that you may have seen in the newspaper
25 notices. The area spans approximately 42,000 acres

1 and six townships. The townships are noted here on
2 the map. Of this area, we have roughly 30,000 acres
3 either under lease or under a wind easement.

4 As you may know as well, the leases that
5 we have, these are voluntary leases with the
6 landowners that have agreed to sign a lease with us.
7 Neither Nobles 2 nor Tenaska has the power to
8 condemn property, to take property from any
9 landowner. Basically, landowners have to be willing
10 to participate in the project. We're not able to
11 force anybody to participate if they don't want to
12 do so. We also have, as you've already seen, we
13 have larger maps scattered throughout the room as
14 well that show more about the project layout, where
15 facilities are planned to be located.

16 Now, I want to spin the next few slides.
17 The next few slides are talking about the facilities
18 that will actually comprise the Nobles Wind Project.
19 One of the more notable components will be the wind
20 turbines, which will be mounted on towers. The
21 towers are expected to have a hub height of between
22 80 and 82 meters high. The number of installed wind
23 turbines could range from 65 to 82, that is going to
24 depend on the generating capacity of the turbine
25 models that are selected. The primary proposed

1 configuration, which is illustrated on the maps here
2 throughout the room, it will have 74 turbines, 10 of
3 the turbines would be 2 megawatt turbines, the
4 remaining 64 would be 3.6 megawatt turbines.

5 You can get a better sense for the
6 primary spots, the yellow circles that are on the
7 maps that are around the room as well as the map
8 that you may have picked up here as you came in. If
9 we end up using more of the smaller turbines, some
10 of the proposed alternate turbines, the pinkish
11 circles on the maps, some of those would become
12 primary turbine sites as part of the layout.

13 Now, there is a possibility, we note this
14 in the permit application, there's a possibility of
15 using larger either 4 megawatt or 4.2 megawatt wind
16 turbines. If we were able to move to that larger
17 turbine, we would be able to reduce the number of
18 primary turbine sites to 65. However, right now the
19 larger turbine is not yet quite commercially
20 available, not quite commercially feasible yet, so
21 essentially we don't have enough information right
22 now to model how that turbine would perform here and
23 exactly where in the layout those would be dropped
24 in. If at any point in time they would become
25 commercially available and prove to be viable on a

1 timeline that is consistent with our timeline, then
2 we would revise the layout and submit a new map into
3 the docket.

4 A little more here about the facilities.
5 As you might imagine, a structure like these wind
6 towers are going to have to be mounted on
7 substantial underground foundations, similar to what
8 we show here in the pictures. These foundations
9 will be constructed of concrete and steel rebar.
10 The geotechnical or underground conditions as well
11 as the size of each individual turbine, that will
12 determine the size and design of each foundation.

13 Additionally, we're going to have
14 underground collection lines and underground
15 communication lines that will run in between each of
16 the wind turbine sites, essentially connecting each
17 wind turbine back to the substation and O&M
18 building, which will be located in the central part
19 of the project just north, northwest here of
20 Wilmont. This picture is an example showing
21 basically the construction of the underground
22 system. Basically here this shows that the
23 underground system would be trenched in and built in
24 that fashion.

25 The plan is that these underground cables

1 would be buried at least four feet deep, and as
2 folks know here, there's a lot of drain tile in the
3 area and we're working to try to minimize impacts to
4 drain tile. We can't promise that we'll be able to
5 avoid all the drain tile, but the main point is is
6 that to the extent we do any damage to any drain
7 tile, it is the project's responsibility to come
8 back and make sure that that drain tile is properly
9 repaired.

10 We also have a project substation and an
11 interconnect switch yard similar to what you see
12 here in the picture. This essentially is the
13 facility that's going to aggregate the electricity
14 that's generated throughout the wind farm. It will
15 then transfer that electricity to the interconnect
16 switch yard, which is then going to condition the
17 electricity and connect it and deliver it to the
18 transmission grid. For our project, the point of
19 interconnection, the place where it's going to
20 connect to the grid, is on the large cell
21 transmission line that runs north and south on the
22 east side of Erickson Avenue. We'll be tapping
23 right into that line. And that's notable as well,
24 we'll build the substation right there. The plan is
25 to build the substation right there by that line so

1 it will be tapping directly into that line so we
2 will not have to build any overhead transmission
3 lines to essentially get to the grid.

4 We also are going to be building access
5 roads as part of the project. This is an example of
6 access roads being built. The access roads are
7 planned to be low profile, which are needed to allow
8 safe access to the operators, to all the wind
9 turbines, in any condition. And as we plan the
10 access roads, how they'll be designed, we're taking
11 into consideration the landowners as well as
12 topographical and the other natural features here in
13 the area. They will be all weather ground
14 construction and once completed they will be 16 feet
15 wide, though I do note that during the construction
16 phase they will be wider, perhaps 40 to 45 feet
17 wide, which is going to be needed to allow the
18 transportation of larger equipment into each site.
19 I will also mention here that we will be evaluating
20 local roads that will be used to haul in the
21 equipment. I will be doing that evaluation before
22 we begin construction and where necessary there may
23 be some local road improvements that will have to be
24 made, strengthen the roads, widen the turn radii to
25 make sure the equipment can be brought in safely.

1 Once completed with the project, it will
2 be our responsibility to come back in and repair any
3 damage that we make to the roads, to remove any
4 temporary improvements that we made, any facilities
5 that we built along the roads. And we are working
6 right now with the county to establish an agreement
7 that will dictate how we basically have to make sure
8 that we come back and restore the roads to the
9 condition that they were in before we started our
10 construction activities.

11 A few other facilities as well that will
12 comprise the project that I'll just note here
13 briefly. There will be an operations and
14 maintenance building -- you might hear it referred
15 to as the O&M building -- that will be built here
16 for the project. It will be located right next to
17 the project substation. And this is going to house
18 the control equipment that will be used to basically
19 monitor and operate the wind farm. There will also
20 be some storage space that'll be included in the O&M
21 building. We're also planning to site permanent
22 meteorological towers here on the wind farm and
23 those will be needed to help us measure and monitor
24 the wind conditions over time. And, lastly, there
25 will be temporary laydown yards that will be needed

1 here for the project to serve as a staging area for
2 the equipment as it comes in and also to be used for
3 parking for the folks right here working on the
4 site. The location of the laydown yard is still to
5 be determined.

6 I will also note that once the
7 construction activities are completed, it's our
8 responsibility to come back in and to restore the
9 land, to repair any temporary disturbances that were
10 caused as part of construction activities. The
11 restoration will include, among other things,
12 seeding, grading, removal of any temporary impacts
13 such as the laydown yard. This is one example of
14 certain restoration activities that you may see.
15 This is hydro seeding, which is a process that's
16 often used for major construction projects to
17 replant grasses following the completion of
18 construction activities.

19 I also want to talk briefly here about
20 project economics. In particular, the economics for
21 the community here in Nobles County. A project like
22 this can bring significant local benefits. The
23 first thing that I'll note is the overall capital
24 investment that's planned right now, we're
25 estimating that that would be between 350 and 400

1 million dollars. It's also known that a project
2 like this will increase the tax revenue for local
3 government units. And we project -- we estimate
4 that based on the forecasted production that that
5 tax benefit for the local governmental units would
6 be between \$1.1 and \$1.3 million. This is also an
7 opportunity to diversify land use and provide
8 another stable stream of income for local landowners
9 through the lease payments as part of the lease
10 agreements that we have with landowners. Based on
11 our production profile, we estimate that the lease
12 payments that will be paid out to landowners each
13 year would be roughly \$1.5 million per year amongst
14 all the landowners. We also estimate that our
15 project here during the construction phase would
16 create up to 230 temporary jobs at peak
17 construction, and during operations approximately 15
18 full-time operation jobs, plus opportunities for
19 seasonal and part-time jobs.

20 There will also be opportunities for
21 local businesses to provide goods and services to
22 the project. And all of this will create some
23 trickle down benefits for the local community, as
24 people here working on the project, as they eat in
25 the local restaurants, use the local shops and

1 services that are available.

2 I'd also like to note that Tenaska has a
3 history of implementing charitable giving programs
4 to support the communities where we own and operate
5 our power plants. These programs included things
6 such as scholarship programs for local area high
7 school seniors, other educational and youth programs
8 and first responder and emergency service programs.
9 To date, Tenaska has awarded more than \$600,000 in
10 college scholarships in areas where we have plants
11 located.

12 And, with that, that will end my remarks
13 here this evening. I hope this has been helpful for
14 you in terms of having a brief summary of Tenaska as
15 well as the Nobles 2 Wind Project. We are certainly
16 excited about this project and we look forward to
17 continue to work with all of you as well as the
18 folks from the Public Utilities Commission and the
19 Department of Commerce to finish out the permitting
20 process and to make the project a reality.

21 With that, I will turn the floor back
22 over to Mike. Actually, to Jamie.

23 MS. JAMIE MACALISTER: All right. Hello,
24 everyone. I'm Jamie MacAlister with the Minnesota
25 Department of Commerce, the Energy Environmental

1 Review and Analysis Unit, and I am helping David on
2 this project, I'm one of the environmental review
3 managers in our office.

4 Before we get into this, I just want to
5 go over some of the handouts that you might have
6 received. You probably got a copy of the
7 presentation, hopefully. The most useful thing
8 about that is that it provides contact information
9 if you need to get in touch with anyone from the
10 project or Mike and his staff at the Public
11 Utilities Commission or David or I at the Department
12 of Commerce. You should have a map of the project
13 area, which shows the project boundary as well as
14 the turbine locations. The turbine locations are in
15 yellow and the alternate turbines are in the pink
16 color. As well, you should have grabbed the sample
17 of the environmental report scoping decision
18 document and the generic permit template that we'll
19 be talking about. And then you may have also
20 grabbed a comment form. And you are welcome to take
21 that with you and fill out your comments at your
22 leisure or fill one out here and you can leave them
23 with Charley.

24 So we want to talk a little bit about why
25 we're here, briefly about the project overview

1 because you've already heard a lot about the project
2 from Scott, talk a little bit about the public
3 participation comments and our meeting guidelines.

4 Oops. Clearly I have gone backwards.

5 Okay. So tonight we're here to get your
6 thoughts and comments on the environmental report
7 and the draft site permit and to provide you with
8 the information on the project and how to provide
9 comments and what the permitting process is going to
10 look like. And the environmental review generally
11 is kind of this amorphous thing that we do, and we
12 rely on the Applicant to provide us information in
13 their application about the project. And we then do
14 the environmental review analysis on that project,
15 and using partially information that they've given
16 us.

17 And then our group, the Energy
18 Environmental Review and Analysis Unit, EERA, we
19 serve as technical staff to the Public Utilities
20 Commission. And our group is scientists and social
21 scientists and we have engineers in our unit and we
22 prepare the environmental report with information
23 that we get not only from the Applicant, but we get
24 information and comments from other state agencies,
25 from federal agencies, from your local governments,

1 the tribes where that's applicable, as well as from
2 your participation in these projects. We prepare
3 the environmental report. We submit that to the
4 Public Utilities Commission and they are the ones
5 that make the decision on the project. So our role
6 is to serve as the technical staff to the Public
7 Utilities Commission.

8 So the project, as Scott was saying, they
9 have a project boundary of 42,000 roughly acres,
10 with 30,000 acres of that approximately that are
11 leased. They're looking at 65 to 82 turbines, and
12 as we heard Scott say, they're looking at roughly 74
13 turbines to be permitted within this box. And we
14 will be looking at a high level at the environmental
15 impacts of what this project will have on the
16 landscape both environmentally, socially, and
17 economically.

18 So if you haven't seen the application
19 and you would like more information, not only do we
20 have some copies here that you can review, but the
21 application is widely available locally at these
22 locations and that's also in your handout.

23 And right now we're at that first star
24 for the public information and scoping meeting. And
25 what we will be doing with the information that you

1 give us is we take all of your comments, our group
2 is the group that we read all the comments, we
3 process them and we take that information and
4 incorporate that into the scope that you have a
5 sample of. We develop that scope and that's what we
6 then use to prepare the environmental report. Once
7 we prepare that report and the draft site permit,
8 that will again go out for comments. And as Mike
9 mentioned, we'll be back out here probably early in
10 the summer for another meeting to get your comments
11 on those documents as well.

12 When we come back out here we'll be here
13 with the administrative law judge. The law judge
14 will prepare a report that will get submitted to the
15 Public Utilities Commission. And all that
16 information will be used by them to make a decision.

17 So we have multiple points for public
18 participation throughout the process. This is just
19 the first of a few opportunities that you'll have.
20 And our schedule, very loosely, is that we will have
21 the comment period, that will close on March 20th,
22 we'll prepare a scope and get all of that out by the
23 end of March. And we will be preparing the
24 environmental report and get a draft site permit out
25 by the end of May. And then we'll be scheduling

1 those follow-up meetings and come back out and get
2 your comments on those.

3 So as Mike mentioned, we have two pieces
4 here where we get public input. One is the
5 certificate of need, and the environmental report is
6 for the certificate of need, and that's a fairly
7 high level analysis and it will look at the no-build
8 alternative and it will look at a generic wind farm.
9 We'll look at the impacts of this project against
10 those other types of facilities as well as another
11 renewable facility which will be a solar facility.
12 And that's a high level review.

13 The site application is used to help
14 develop the draft site permit. So if you're
15 interested in providing information to us about what
16 should be included in the draft site permit, because
17 a draft site permit not only allows the Applicant to
18 construct the project, but it also is the
19 opportunity to provide other conditions for the
20 project that might be necessary to ensure that the
21 project is built with environmental concerns in
22 mind, make sure that we're mitigating any of those
23 impacts, and these comments are helpful because we
24 get local on-the-ground information from folks like
25 you who live here in the community.

1 So the application also provides
2 information on all of the facilities that will be
3 built with the project, so the access roads and the
4 operations and maintenance building, those
5 additional facilities that go along with this
6 project. And it helps -- it also is where we define
7 the project boundary, so all of that gets defined
8 within the application. And like I said, it informs
9 permit conditions. So if you're interested in
10 providing comments on a draft site permit, please
11 look at the application to get an idea of the
12 information that you might want to include in that
13 comment.

14 So what we will be looking at is the
15 potential human environmental impacts that this
16 project will have. We would be interested in
17 knowing if you have any methods or other ways that
18 we can minimize and mitigate any of the impacts that
19 this project may cause, and whether or not there are
20 unique characteristics in the area that we should be
21 aware of as we do the review and draft the site
22 permit. As well as if there is any information that
23 you think that is missing from the application that
24 we should be aware of.

25 So as I mentioned, for the environmental

1 report, that is the -- for this project that is
2 where we will be looking at a no-build alternative
3 and some of these project alternatives, and any
4 other alternatives that you think might be helpful
5 for us to consider as we draft that report. And if
6 you are proposing some alternatives, what's really
7 helpful for us is if you can identify what you think
8 some of the impacts are and how we might avoid
9 impacts that you're concerned about.

10 So there are lots of ways for you to
11 comment. You can comment here tonight. You can
12 state and spell your name for Janet, she will be
13 transcribing this meeting, take all that information
14 down. You can fill out the comment form, leave it
15 with us. You can send it in at your leisure, you
16 can comment online, or you can mail it in. So long
17 as we get your comments by March 20th, 2018, that's
18 the important date to remember here. You will be
19 sending your comments to David.

20 And tonight I think we'll have plenty of
21 time, but we're asking for one speaker at a time. I
22 don't think we got any speaker cards, but -- no
23 speaker cards, so we'll do a show of hands and you
24 can come and sit here, have the microphone, state
25 and spell your name for Janet. Have respect for

1 others here. And to the extent possible, focus your
2 comments on either the impacts that you would like
3 to see addressed in the environmental report or
4 potential permit conditions that you think we should
5 consider for the draft site permit.

6 So, with that, we'll open it up.

7 MR. NATE O'REILLY: Hi. My name is Nate
8 O'Reilly, O-R-E-I-L-L-Y.

9 I guess I would like to have my comments
10 or questions regarding the permit conditions. First
11 off, during Tenaska's presentation they talked about
12 the 250 construction jobs and the economic benefit
13 to the region and the state.

14 What steps is Tenaska going to take to
15 ensure that these jobs go to local Minnesota
16 workers? I ask this question because too often the
17 full economic benefit is not realized on these
18 projects because developers and contractors choose
19 to use a largely out-state work force. The most
20 recent example of this is the Red Pine project up
21 near Ivanhoe, which used 80 or 90 percent
22 out-of-state workers. Contractors that don't use --
23 or developers that don't use Minnesota workers or
24 developers often claim it is difficult to achieve
25 this due to the need and experience of trained and

1 skilled workers to construct these large complex
2 projects. I would counter that argument by saying
3 that hiring local Minnesota workers can and has been
4 achieved on projects such as the Prairie Rose Wind
5 Farm, Nobles 1, here in this area, and also the
6 proposed Blazing Star out near Hendricks, which has
7 made a commitment to use local Minnesota workers.

8 Additionally, a comment -- or a
9 commitment by Tenaska or the Public Utilities
10 Commission not only offers an interest in the
11 construction trades for local workers, but a star
12 kind of pathway to a lifelong career that will
13 pay -- and a job that'll pay family support and
14 wages and benefits.

15 Growing up in a small town in greater
16 Minnesota myself, I know firsthand the limited
17 opportunities for access to good jobs like this. So
18 on behalf of the current Minnesota work force and
19 specifically the young men and women who desire a
20 career in the skilled construction trades, I have a
21 request for both Tenaska and the Commission.

22 Tenaska, if you're willing to make a commitment to
23 hiring Minnesota workers, and the Public Utilities
24 Commission, if they would be willing to consider
25 this as a condition of the permit.

1 Thank you.

2 MS. JAMIE MACALISTER: Anyone else?

3 MR. STACY KARELS: Stacy Karels, Laborers
4 Local 563 out of Mankato, Minnesota. K-A-R-E-L-S.

5 Going off of what Nate just said, these
6 construction projects do provide good economic value
7 to not only the landowners but to the residents that
8 have some construction experience and want to work
9 on projects like this.

10 I have one of my members down here
11 tonight who is actually from 30 minutes down the
12 road, from Brewster. He started seven years ago on
13 a project just north of town here working for the
14 wind farms and has continued to work on wind farms
15 for the last 11 years. He's made a career out of
16 it, good paying jobs, family supportive wages and
17 benefits. It's just stuff that we're coming out
18 here to help promote and keep these jobs local to
19 Minnesota, work in Minnesota, why aren't the
20 residents getting these jobs to help fulfill the
21 needs for these projects.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. ERIC JOENS: Eric Joens, J-O-E-N-S,
24 Bloom Township, I'm a resident, I live about six
25 miles east of here.

1 I'm here to ask for consideration
2 regarding the loss of cellular signal and broadband
3 signal. The last project they did south of Wilmont,
4 as you know, I live six miles east of here, if you
5 ever drive north of Reading and your cell phone
6 drops, your phone drops, yeah, it's the signal that
7 they transmit from the towers and then it goes east.
8 And so basically we created a dead zone with the
9 last project. Another good example of that, my
10 neighbor that's a mile south of me had an equipment
11 fire, a brand new loader, he can't use his cell
12 phone, he had to run to the house. It's 1970s, you
13 know. It's not acceptable.

14 Our next and our current issue is for a
15 lot of our neighbors now is we are in kind of a
16 geographical area where we have poor broadband
17 service. So we have broadband that comes off the
18 Wilmont water tower, your next available tower is
19 the northeast Graham Lakes Township, so we're kind
20 of in the middle there. And they'd like to put a
21 tower there, but they can't because all the
22 easements are taken. So we're kind of in a little
23 bit of a tough spot, right. But we do have signal
24 from the line of sight from the Wilmont water tower,
25 and being on the east side of the Wilmont water

1 tower and the east side of the wind farm, or
2 potential wind farm, we could lose our connectivity
3 to broadband.

4 We've tried MBTV which comes out with
5 their brochures and they have connectivity, they
6 have actually come to my farm three times, they
7 brought their 32-foot extension ladders, crawled on
8 the big machines, and said, sorry, you won't be
9 happy. So that's our only option now for
10 connectivity. I have three kids, a family, schools,
11 everything. Connectivity, even to print a 1099
12 today, everything is done electronically. So don't
13 cut our communication off.

14 So please consider having some kind of
15 repeater ability, some kind of repeater tower on the
16 east side for us, because the last time, the last
17 wind farm, it really negatively impacted. But I
18 didn't have an issue but now we have an issue and I
19 don't want to have another one if that's the same
20 issue, if it broadcasts the single cell phone
21 signal, at least.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. JEREMY DUEHR: I'd like to clarify.
24 Is that the cell phone signal and broadband?

25 MR. ERIC JOENS: Yep.

1 MS. LISA ONKEN: Lisa Onken, O-N-K-E-N.

2 I'm just going to go next because I'm
3 going to build off of what Eric had said. Just to
4 reinforce that idea, because I don't want it to be
5 thought of as just a cellular issue, because it's
6 not all about kids on the phone, people have home
7 offices that will be impacted. So I would, if this
8 were to happen, I live very close to Eric, and if
9 this were to impact my home office, that would
10 therefore restrict my ability to work and I think
11 that needs to be taken into consideration as well
12 and there may be other people in that same boat.

13 In addition to that, I just want to also
14 remind the group, which is not sometimes as well
15 known, is that there's a lot of economic development
16 professionals that have been working really hard to
17 bring better broadband to greater Minnesota, and
18 that has been a lot of work for a lot of years. And
19 if it went backwards because of the wind towers, I
20 don't know what on earth we've been doing this for
21 with the governor and everybody. So I just want to
22 make sure that we don't take three steps forward,
23 one step back, because we have to build wind towers
24 to block this. So if there's another way to get
25 around it, so be it.

1 And then the last comment would be, I
2 know this sounds archaic, but we're actually on an
3 aerial antenna for our TV still, and a lot of people
4 laugh at us, and so that will also probably be
5 impacted, but we do that. So I would really like to
6 not see that be impacted as well. But it's relative
7 to those three areas.

8 Thank you.

9 MS. JAMIE MACALISTER: Thank you.

10 Anyone else?

11 MR. ROGER KRUEGER: Roger Krueger,
12 K-R-U-E-G-E-R. The reason why it's the E before the
13 G, is all the Kruegers that came through Ellis
14 Island were spelled the old German way. The people
15 that spell Krueger today took the E out before the
16 G, but I have to thank Ellis Island because we came
17 here legally. Being I made that statement, I am in
18 favor of DACA, we need to do construction work in
19 America today, I'll tell you that.

20 Right here in Wilmont, we're right here
21 where we're not on the Continental Divide, but we're
22 on a water demarcation. So you people are pretty
23 much on top of the Buffalo Ridge, a good place for a
24 wind farm, a wind project. We did Nobles County 1.
25 Very nice project. This project here we probably

1 have a few red flags on because we don't know who
2 you are. That doesn't mean we can't work with you.
3 I represent construction workers and all the trades.
4 And I'm not necessarily talking about union people,
5 I'm talking about Minnesota people within a 100-mile
6 radius of this work site. And I'm speaking not only
7 as I look over this room and I see there's possibly
8 got to be landowners here or even people in the
9 community that probably are not going to put up a
10 tower but they're interested in what this project is
11 all about. They work so far, and you're talking
12 about big megawatt towers versus the small ones. I
13 would recommend the bigger ones and ask you to
14 consider that because I've been doing this for
15 several decades and not too far from here, Chandler,
16 where they really got started about three decades
17 ago, they are even considering at some point in time
18 to be dismantling those and putting up bigger
19 turbines. Do you realize what that takes? I mean,
20 that's got to be totally dismantled. Including the
21 foundation, by the way. You can't use that old
22 foundation over for a bigger tower. So I would
23 highly recommend you consider the bigger towers.

24 Getting back to the workforce, people. I
25 look around here and we see a lot of seniors in

1 here. Consider your grandchildren that could have
2 jobs building these projects. This is not the last
3 project. I mean, these projects, like I say,
4 started at Chandler, and now they come all the way
5 from Watertown, all the way to Worthington. They've
6 been expanded off of Buffalo Ridge. And even in the
7 eastern part of the state. And there's other
8 projects.

9 Take here just this past year, they
10 completed the Missouri River water project. They
11 came up the state line and just stayed there for a
12 couple years and now we got that over to
13 Worthington. You take Luverne, Minnesota, that
14 Missouri River project comes through that town. And
15 now true shrimping is going to be locating in that
16 town. It's going to be a nine-acre building. Nine
17 acres under one roof. And that's not the only one.
18 Once they get that thing up and running, they've got
19 a current project going on right up there where I
20 live, at Tracy.

21 And the project they got going on is just
22 their demonstrating project, and once they get that
23 completed in the next year, that's going be the
24 ninth largest shrimp producing project in America,
25 just that little project. Can you imagine what

1 that's going to be in Luverne? Those are
2 construction jobs for your grandchildren. I
3 recommend your grandchildren be a little selfish and
4 go to medical school because that's a better paying
5 job, or if they're ag students, you get into the
6 ground, but if it's not for them, get them in
7 construction jobs. Good paying jobs, retirement,
8 benefits. And that's what we need for our people
9 here in rural America and Southwestern Minnesota.

10 Thank you.

11 MS. JAMIE MACALISTER: Anyone else?

12 MR. DAVID BIRKHOLZ: Since we've come
13 out, we're happy to stay and listen to you talk. So
14 this is your chance, but it's not your only chance,
15 obviously. You can write us an email, you can call
16 us, you can do any number of things. But you should
17 feel free to stand up and talk to us here if you'd
18 like and we can take back your message to St. Paul.

19 Nobody else wants to? We can stay and
20 chat awhile in the back and everybody can have a
21 cookie, that's fine too.

22 So we'll call it one more time. If
23 somebody wants to raise their hand to speak? Are we
24 good to go?

25 Well, then, again, I will ask one more

1 time.

2 Thank you for coming and keep in touch
3 and let's do this together. We'll make sure
4 everything gets -- if the project is okay by the
5 PUC, we'll make sure that it's done right and it's
6 done according to the laws and the environment and
7 the economics of everybody involved.

8 So thank you very much for showing up.

9 (Meeting concluded at 6:54 p.m.)

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