



February 1, 2024

RE: Docket numbers CN-20-865; WS-20-866; TL-20

To the Public Utilities Commission:

My name is Kayla Christensen, and I am the executive director of the Minnesota Conservative Energy Forum (MnCEF), a center-right nonprofit organization that advocates for an “all-of-the-above,” market-based approach to energy policy. Our goal is to modernize the electricity markets, create jobs, free consumers, and ensure their voices are heard. I am writing to you today in support of the Dodge County Wind (Dodge Wind) project being proposed by NextEra Energy Resources (NEER).

We have been following the Dodge Wind project closely and have grown increasingly frustrated and disheartened by Minnesota’s permitting process. A project that should have taken roughly a year to permit and should by now be providing Minnesota with renewable energy, has turned into a nearly three-year prolonged process. As of today, the project is no closer to construction than it was a year ago. Local officials have stated publicly many times that they do not oppose renewable energy; even that they support it. Their actions over time, however, have proven otherwise, putting a significant investment in the local economy, and millions of dollars in landowner payments, in jeopardy. We are concerned that a roadmap has been drawn up for any local officials and community members who oppose renewable energy projects to continually delay permitting and chase away future investments in the state.

Much of the heartburn around the project has been concerning the transmission line, which is necessary to transport energy produced by the project to the energy grid. We fully support a robust permitting process that allows for local entities and citizens to share their input – this is vital to the project to ensure safety and the best outcome for everyone involved. During the 2023 legislative session, NextEra worked with MnDOT and the legislature to clarify language around utilizing public rights of way that should have solved much of the issue around transmission which should have alleviated many of the concerns expressed from local officials and a group of landowners. These officials and the same group of landowners, however, have continued to take actions which have delayed permitting even further rather than work collaboratively to come to a resolution to address concerns.

These developments, especially in recent months, have set an extremely dangerous precedent that these projects can be delayed, and even killed, by adversarial local officials, landowners, and poorly supported science. This is especially concerning as the Minnesota Legislature adopted the 100% renewable energy by 2040 standard last session.

MnCEF encourages you to approve the Dodge County Wind project as soon as possible and allow Minnesota’s environment, economy, and consumers to benefit from this significant investment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kayla Christensen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kayla Christensen  
Executive Director

Minnesota Conservative Energy Forum