

May 20, 2009

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Harmony, MN 55939

Larry Hartman
MN Office of Energy Security
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St. Paul, MN 55101-2198

Larry,

Please consider my comments on the proposed ECOHARMONY WEST project. The public information meeting you lead in Harmony was helpful to understand some aspects of the project, but still left me with some concerns regarding this project and the overall wind energy buildup.

Regarding specific setbacks, I believe that the buffer of “5 rotor diameters on the prevailing wind directions and 3 RD on the non-prevailing wind directions from the perimeter of the lands where the Permittee does not hold the wind rights” needs to be addressed. Why is there a difference between the prevailing and non-prevailing wind direction setbacks? I am assuming that the setback of 5 RD must have come from some sort of study determining that to be a minimum distance.... With that in mind I would ask you to consider a 5 RD setback in the non-prevailing in direction as well. The reason being is that the wind will blow in all directions, and just because it may not be the majority of the time is no reason to subject certain homeowners to less standards than you have set for the homeowners that have to deal with the wind in the majority of instances.

I believe that should be an absolute minimum, but there is more to consider with regard to setbacks from non-participating landowners. The state legislature has mandated that MN must reach a certain percentage of renewable energy production by a certain year (i.e. 25% by the year 2020, I don't recall the exact numbers), which is something that every person in MN should feel good about and have little objection. The homeowners in whatever city or state that will be using the power from a large wind farm can feel good that their power is coming from a cleaner source, and certainly the approx. 110 landowners that were offered and accepted invitation to participate in this large scale wind project will be happy with the \$765,000 in initial payments, \$5,000 per turbine payment for hassles related to construction, and estimated annual payments of \$6,750 per turbine/year. And of course the payments that go to the county, local government, and schools can hardly be looked at in a negative manner. So the point for you to consider is the small group of people that will have the negative aspects of a large wind project to live with everyday. Those people are the landowners that declined, or more likely were never invited, to be a part of the project. Please re-consider your setback distances from non-participating landowners. A minimum distance of 1/3 of a mile from property boundaries would give a much needed buffer for the people that receive the same “good

feelings” about clean energy as any other person in the state, but are the only people in the state that have the negative impacts like decreased property values, increases noise levels, and construction dangers.

There are quite obviously huge amounts of money being made at all different levels with a project like this. And while I certainly understand the extra cost of every foot of cable or road that would have to be put in to give that extended buffer, I believe that those cost could easily be covered somewhere in this process of electrical generation... if nothing else put an extra fee of the monthly electric bill of the people who will actually get to use this clean energy, or maybe for everyone in the state. If I had to pay .50 cents a month to give some landowners a livable setback from a group of wind towers or a coal mine, etc. I would think that was a pretty small price to pay compared to what they might have to put up with.

Finally, there are areas in and adjacent to the project that has a large number of families that are going to be affected by this project. Families with young children that will be subjected to the dangers of 30 – 40 cement trucks per pad and numerous other construction vehicles as well as the long term effects of living very close to a large scale wind farm. The construction phase will go away, but there have not been enough in-depth studies done to determine if there are any long term affects on people that live near these towers day in and day out for years on end. I ask you to further consider those potential problems and hope that we error on the side of caution when it comes to placement of the wind towers. Thank you for your time and considerations.

Sincerely,

Donald R. Schoepski