

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2011

7:00 p.m.

In the Matter of Application of Big Blue Wind Farm, LLC,
for a Large Wind Energy Conversion System Site Permit for
the 36 Megawatt Big Blue Wind Farm in Faribault County

PUC Docket Number: IP-6851/WS-10-1238

Hamilton Hall
209 South Main Street
Blue Earth, Minnesota

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21
22
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24
25

I N D E X

SPEAKER	PAGE
Bill Eckles	7
Jason Larson	8
Greg Mastin	14
Dan Moore	16
Greg Young	21
Jim Meyer	25
Laura Larson	27
Shirley Hannaman	35
Jim Meyer	37
Greg Young	42
Duane Eric	45
Dennis Paschke	46
Ron Greimann	55
Jim Walsman	56
Greg Mastin	57
Jason Larson	60
Rob Wolf	61
Dennis Paschke	65

1 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: Thanks. Hi, I'm
2 Collin Rudeen. I'm from Exergy Development Group of
3 Idaho.

4 I've got a few folks here with us
5 tonight. We have Lori Rietze and Liz Woolstenhulme,
6 and they are our land and title experts. Those of
7 you who are within the project boundary have
8 probably spent some time with them.

9 Robert Lipskoch is also with us. He's
10 had a number of consulting jobs for us, wears a
11 couple of hats. He's also a landowner within our
12 project in Idaho, one of our projects in Idaho.

13 Kevin Bittner from Bolton & Menk. They
14 are doing the civil design for us, as well as
15 surveying and also a couple of other issues with
16 permitting, et cetera.

17 And we've got Matt Sederstrom and
18 Steve Core. They're both from Fagen and they'll be
19 doing our construction.

20 So we're based in Boise, Idaho. We've
21 got about 200 megawatts of projects that we've built
22 in Montana and Idaho. And Ingrid's introduced the
23 project pretty well, so I'll leave it to you guys if
24 you have questions on further details or concerns.

25 And as she mentioned, we have made a

1 change with our turbine choice. I know it stresses
2 me out to have to switch turbines sort of late in
3 the game. I don't like doing it, but we kind of
4 have to play the hand we're dealt.

5 The three turbines that we're looking at
6 are the Nordex, it's a 2.5 megawatt turbine. It's
7 got a 100-meter diameter rotor, it's a 100-meter hub
8 height. So if we did end up using that turbine
9 there would be fewer turbines in the site, it would
10 be 15 turbines.

11 We're looking at a Gamesa 2.0 megawatt
12 turbine. That is a 97-meter rotor diameter and a
13 90-meter hub height. And that is the same size as
14 the REpower turbine from a nameplate perspective,
15 it's also two megawatts, so that should be similar.

16 And finally, the GE 1.6 megawatt turbine,
17 which is in your draft site permit. That one's
18 still the same, 82-and-a-half-meter rotor diameter
19 and 80-meter hub height.

20 We like to think that we're a good
21 neighbor, we strive to be. So we look forward to
22 hearing your questions and any concerns you might
23 have.

24 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Okay. So now if
25 you look at the slide handout, we've kind of made

1 our way about halfway through already. And so if
2 you look kind of halfway through it, it says draft
3 site permit next to the flowchart, and there's two
4 questions.

5 I mean, this is a public information
6 meeting, so we're here to take questions about the
7 project, questions about our process here at the
8 State of Minnesota, the site permit process, but
9 we're also really here to talk about the draft site
10 permit.

11 Specifically, kind of looking at these
12 two questions: What portion of the draft site
13 permit should be changed or amended to more properly
14 site the project, or what needs to be added to the
15 draft site permit to more properly site the project?

16 I do kind of want to point out a couple
17 of things. You probably are aware that Faribault
18 County has enacted a wind ordinance for projects
19 less than five megawatts. That ordinance has not
20 been incorporated into the draft site permit, but if
21 you have comments on that tonight, I mean, that's
22 what we're here for.

23 Section 6.2 of the draft site permit
24 addresses shadow flicker and, you know, some
25 analysis or modeling that the applicant would have

1 to do about impacts.

2 Just a quick note, with a turbine change
3 and a higher hub height, that would affect shadow
4 flicker impacts that would be different, greater,
5 you know, generally speaking, because the turbines
6 are taller than what is in the application to date.
7 The applicant will be required to submit additional
8 information in the record on this subject and also
9 on noise. Noise is addressed in sections 4.3 and
10 6.6 of the draft site permit.

11 The last slide in the slideshow is really
12 just kind of a reminder to keep your comments under
13 five minutes per speaker. If you really want to
14 speak again, you definitely have an opportunity to
15 speak at the end if the time allows. I think I was
16 informed earlier this evening that we do have to be
17 out of here by 10:00. And also, please state and
18 spell your name for the court reporter, to make sure
19 we can get that information entered in correctly.

20 So, with that, I'll open it up to
21 comments and questions from the public. We do have
22 a mic if you want to come forward and talk. I think
23 we do have speaker cards.

24 Ray, do we have speaker cards?

25 MR. RAY KIRSCH: (Shakes head.)

1 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: We don't have
2 speaker cards. So please, anybody? Somebody's got
3 to be first.

4 Go ahead.

5 MR. BILL ECKLES: Hello. Good evening.
6 Bill Eckles, E-C-K-L-E-S. I represent BEVCOMM, the
7 local telecommunications provider.

8 And in looking through the draft permit,
9 just some concerns with section 6.4 and
10 interference. I'd like to see a little bit more
11 detail as far as what the assessment is going to be
12 providing.

13 You know, it just states: The assessment
14 shall be designed to provide data that be can used
15 in the future to determine whether the turbines and
16 associated facilities are a cause of disruption or
17 interference. I'd like to see a little more details
18 about what that assessment's going to be, as well as
19 some details as to what mitigation efforts can be
20 done and what -- how conflict resolution would be
21 handled.

22 It's nice from our perspective, because
23 there have been instances where wind farms have been
24 built and caused significant issues for the local
25 utility, to be able to address those ahead of time

1 versus after the fact.

2 Thank you. And for the record, I'm for
3 this project.

4 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Well, thank you so
5 much. And I think it's a good idea if you and I
6 talk at some point over the next week or two about
7 maybe the location of your telecommunication lines.

8 MR. BILL ECKLES: Sure.

9 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: And I'd like to do
10 that, too.

11 MR. BILL ECKLES: I'll get you our cards.

12 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Yeah, so we can --
13 but thank you so much.

14 Okay. Who's next? You can ask questions
15 about the project. And, you know, if you don't want
16 to come up I can bring the mic to you as well if you
17 don't want to come up to the microphone stand.

18 So you all drove quite a ways to get
19 here, I'm sure. The weather's not that great, so
20 I'm sure you all came to learn more about the
21 project. Do you have any questions about the
22 project, the process?

23 Yes.

24 MR. JASON LARSON: My name's
25 Jason Larson. I live right in the middle of this

1 project. And I would not be for this project, but I
2 know things can happen and you just have to deal
3 with what happens.

4 But my wife has e-mailed and there were
5 concerns about shadow flicker and noise, how it
6 would affect us adversely. And in my community, I
7 don't just worry about me, I think there's a lot of
8 things that people don't and haven't been informed
9 of.

10 When my wife brought this up -- I got
11 this big folder full of stuff (indicating), and this
12 is what it tells us of how it would adversely affect
13 us as far as shadow flicker and noise. Me, living
14 in the township, not being a supporter or just being
15 a person not involved in it at all, should not be
16 affected ever, in my opinion.

17 I don't care if it's -- they can
18 calculate this right down to the minutes, the hours
19 I could be affected by it a year. I shouldn't have
20 to be affected at all, and I've got real huge
21 problems with that.

22 And I don't think everybody realizes that
23 these numbers, they're great. Yeah. Whatever. I
24 travel all over the country, I've been on many
25 projects, we haul equipment for them. These

1 footages, it's a lot different than what it shows.
2 I was on a farm the other day. I was a half mile
3 away, there's shadow flicker. You know, and it's a
4 lot. And I just -- there's things in our township
5 that I just hope that everybody realizes this is
6 really going to affect us in a long-term way.

7 And there's a lot of things. Like I
8 said, if I happen to ask the right question, well,
9 there's a lot of information. But there's no
10 transparency here at all. Nobody tells anybody
11 anything unless you happen to come to this meeting.
12 There was a meeting today, who knows what happened
13 there. It's none of my business, I'm not involved,
14 but some transparency for everybody because we all
15 need to know how it's going to affect us.

16 And like I said, these state numbers,
17 I've got a huge problem with the state saying how
18 much is tolerable. Noise, shadow flicker: Zero's
19 tolerable in my world. I can go out there now,
20 there's not a sound. I shouldn't have to hear
21 anything. There's one thing, the train's there, I
22 can deal with that, but I shouldn't have to listen
23 to a tower howl. It's just -- but I love the
24 numbers, it's a huge thing. It's great. But that's
25 my comment.

1 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Well, thank you
2 very much for your comments, and I'll say a few
3 words about that.

4 I'll start with shadow flicker. The
5 state does not have a shadow flicker standard.
6 There is no right amount or wrong amount of shadow
7 flicker that people should be subjected to or not
8 subjected to. So as we're moving through this
9 process we look at mitigation, because there isn't a
10 standard, there isn't a line that we can draw in the
11 sand: This is okay; this isn't.

12 We do know that shadow flicker is at its
13 greatest early morning and late evening when the
14 shadows are long. Tower height, as they mentioned
15 they might have increased tower height, it would
16 increase the shadow flicker. They have voluntarily
17 agreed to a setback from residences of 1,000 feet
18 and 1,500 feet, it looks like, unless there's an
19 agreement with them, so that would be the
20 nonparticipating landowners.

21 Now, could shadow flicker still occur at
22 1,500 feet? Yeah, perhaps it could. It does depend
23 on where the turbine is located and its orientation
24 to the home. Some homes could be near, you know,
25 one, two, or more turbines that it could be

1 affected.

2 It is something that -- it's not -- the
3 state, you know, we look at impacts, but, again,
4 there aren't any rules to follow regarding this
5 issue. So we do look for public input, we look to
6 the science, and, you know, frankly, we try to
7 strike a balance. And I know it's not easy, but we
8 do take the concerns very seriously and we do look
9 at mitigation.

10 As part of mitigation, 6.2 in the draft
11 site permit requires the applicant to submit prior
12 to preconstruction, so this is really occurring at
13 the micrositing stage of the turbines, they have to
14 provide information documenting the amount of shadow
15 flicker on each residence of a nonparticipating
16 landowner and a participating landowner.

17 So how we envision this is we see how
18 much nonparticipating landowners are affected
19 compared to participating, and then we use these
20 results. And if we can mitigate in the micrositing
21 process, if that works out and we work with the
22 applicant on that, then that's -- then we, you know,
23 look to mitigation.

24 However, if anybody has any suggestions
25 for the draft site permit language, too, this is the

1 time to suggest some additional language. You could
2 feel free to put that in writing as well. But we
3 also require the permittee to document its efforts
4 on how it did minimize. So they took shadow flicker
5 into consideration when siting these turbines, that
6 they just didn't -- that it wasn't an afterthought,
7 that they thought about it when they were
8 micrositing.

9 On noise there is a standard, we do have
10 a state standard for noise. That is 50 decibels on
11 the A-weighted scale at nighttime. Now, does that
12 mean you can't hear turbine noise from your house?
13 No, it does not mean -- you could hear noise at your
14 home by meeting the noise standard.

15 Again, this is the state standard we have
16 to go by. We do look at the applicant to
17 demonstrate what they did to mitigate noise. In
18 this particular draft site permit they would be
19 required to do a postconstruction noise study. They
20 were required to do noise studies, noise modeling
21 going into this in their application, and now they
22 will be asked also to do a postconstruction noise
23 study, you know, more or less to ensure that the
24 noise standard was met, but also to look at other
25 factors with that postconstruction noise study as

1 well.

2 There are impacts to a wind farm. And so
3 we do realize that this does impact the community,
4 which is why this is the -- a public meeting we do
5 hold to get input, and we do have two public comment
6 periods to take comments from people.

7 The Public Utilities Commission, as I
8 mentioned, is the decisionmaker. They will be
9 making the decision in June. Possibly July, but
10 likely June. And they could deny a permit or use
11 this draft permit as the final permit or a different
12 permit with different conditions. But we look to
13 develop the record so they can make the best
14 decision possible.

15 So I hope this helps. And any more
16 comments or questions from the audience?

17 Yes.

18 MR. GREG MASTIN: My name's Greg Mastin.
19 Supervisor of Jo Daviess Township.

20 And this is a letter -- we met, and it's
21 our position concerning the power lines and the
22 transfer lines. And it is our position that any
23 power lines that are built with regard to this
24 project be constructed underground and not overhead.

25 The reason for our position is as

1 follows: Faribault County currently has an
2 ordinance that these power lines be constructed
3 underground from other windmills that are there.
4 Following precedents, we currently have two
5 windmills which have been built west of town and
6 they were underground power lines.

7 Appearance and safety issues surrounding
8 overhead power lines, the poles to farm around. And
9 lastly, it is our understanding that a local farm
10 co-op would charge more per acre for applying
11 chemicals by air near these windmills and power
12 lines, and this increased cost for the farmers for
13 aerial application would be detrimental.

14 Thank you. M-A-S-T-I-N.

15 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you for
16 those comments. Yes, I do understand that there is
17 an issue with whether the feeder lines should be
18 buried or be overhead.

19 Typically a permit, and I believe this
20 permit as well, this draft site permit, leaves it
21 optional of whether they're buried or overhead for
22 the feeder lines. The collector lines are always
23 buried. There is also an ordinance that Faribault
24 County has passed that applies to projects less than
25 five megawatts that does require that feeder lines

1 are buried.

2 So this is something that will need to be
3 developed further in the record. And the applicant,
4 I know I'm looking forward to receiving some
5 information from them on their position on whether
6 they should be overhead or underground. So the
7 record continues to be developed on that point.

8 So thank you so much for that input,
9 that's very, very valuable.

10 So, other comments, questions about our
11 process, the project? The applicant is here, too,
12 if you have questions on, you know, roads, access
13 roads, something.

14 Yes.

15 MR. DAN MOORE: Hi. I'm Dan Moore,
16 M-O-O-R-E. And I'm president of Windfinity, who is
17 the group of farmers that started this project in
18 2003.

19 And I can tell you that we're thrilled to
20 have this meeting, we've been wanting this meeting
21 for eight years now. I wish it was warmer outside
22 and not so snowy, but that's the way it is. So
23 we're just glad that Exergy is going to be here to
24 finish the development and build this. And they've
25 assembled a great team with Fagen and Bolton & Menk

1 to microsite these turbines and do a great job with
2 installing the roads.

3 And there's a lot of question on the
4 tile, which we've already talked about tonight, but
5 maybe you can talk about how you're going to put the
6 tile in and make sure that they're fixed right.
7 That's the number one question that I get and Lori
8 gets and Liz gets, is how we're going to fix the
9 tile and how that all works.

10 But, once again, thanks for coming here,
11 and thanks Exergy and everybody else.

12 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you.

13 The drainage trial issue is something
14 that is very commonly brought up in public meetings
15 like this. People usually do have concerns on how
16 their drainage tile will be dealt with if it is
17 broken. So does anybody have any concerns about
18 that?

19 I could have the company briefly make a
20 statement on how they plan on addressing -- what's
21 your course of action on fixing drainage tile? Do
22 you have a policy in place?

23 MS. LIZ WOOLSTENHULME: Well, pursuant to
24 our lease --

25 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: It's pursuant to

1 your lease?

2 MS. LIZ WOOLSTENHULME: Yeah, I mean, we
3 will fix any damaged drain tiles. And I think we
4 have spoken to lot of the individuals in here
5 individually about it as well, so maybe that's why
6 there's not a whole lot of questions.

7 But I think, Matt, if you have anything
8 to say, I know that you guys are very experienced
9 out in the area. And that might add some comfort
10 because Fagen is working on this project and they
11 are from this area, they are very familiar with
12 drain tiles.

13 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Okay. That is a
14 common question we do get.

15 Other questions, concerns? There's a lot
16 of you here tonight and you drove quite a ways to be
17 here, so this is your time to get your comments on
18 the record, then you won't have to take time to
19 write them out.

20 You have the draft site permit before
21 you. If you see anything in there that needs to be
22 expanded on, isn't sufficient, something that's
23 missing.

24 Just to give you -- section 4, typically
25 this generally lays out the setbacks. You have a

1 wind access buffer where the setbacks from
2 nonparticipating property has to be three-by-five
3 rotor diameters. So that's five rotor diameters in
4 the prevailing wind and three rotor diameters in the
5 nonprevailing wind direction. And that -- so this
6 could range anywhere from, you know, 700 feet to
7 over 1,500 feet depending on the rotor diameter
8 length.

9 And because they're introducing new
10 turbines, which they e-mailed me about last week,
11 this is a very recent change, they will have to put
12 information into the record that's presented,
13 similarly as they did in the application, so you
14 will understand the rotor diameter so these setbacks
15 will make sense.

16 I do realize this is a little later in
17 the process. It is not that unusual to have turbine
18 changes being proposed midway through. If they were
19 bigger changes like a boundary change, then that
20 is -- we might actually change the structure of the
21 public participation process. But with the turbine
22 change, we do have the comment period open until
23 May 6th.

24 So we also in section 4 have setbacks to
25 roads. Typically the state just requires a 250-foot

1 setback from roads. I do know in the ordinance it's
2 250 feet or 1.1 times the turbine height, you know,
3 whichever is greater. That is not included in the
4 draft site permit. We tend to, at the state, go by
5 250 feet from a road because we don't -- turbines
6 generally don't fall over flat like that
7 (indicating), and if there's a turbine collapse it
8 tends to go straight down. It doesn't happen too
9 often, but one just occurred in North Dakota and it
10 happened in New York.

11 We have setbacks to public lands. I do
12 know that there's Reinvest in Minnesota land in the
13 project area. That is something I just drove out
14 and took a look at before tonight's meeting. It
15 looks very pretty out there. That is also something
16 that we closely look at.

17 I know there are some proposed turbine
18 locations. Keep in mind that these turbine
19 locations are all proposed, these aren't necessarily
20 where the turbines are going to go. That's
21 something that they propose, I think they'll be
22 proposing additional turbine locations with their
23 turbine change. Again, that's not something that's
24 set in stone.

25 At the state, if a permit is issued we

1 look at the best possible site for the turbines.
2 There doesn't appear to be any native prairie in the
3 project area. If we do think that native prairie is
4 going to be impacted, they do have to put together a
5 native prairie restoration plan or mitigation plan.
6 If you know of any native prairie in the project
7 area, it's a great time to let me know, you can also
8 send me a letter.

9 So do we have any other comments?

10 Great. Go ahead. There's two people,
11 so -- you've already stood up, if you want to come
12 up.

13 MR. GREG YOUNG: Hello. My name is
14 Greg Young. I am the county commissioner for the
15 majority of this district, District Two.

16 Just a little bit of background for your
17 information. Mr. Moore spoke that eight years ago,
18 apparently, when the initial group tried to bring
19 this project forward, now it's subsequent people.
20 We had a conditional use permit sometime, I don't
21 recall if it was eight years ago, but for a
22 substation to hook this facility up to the grid.

23 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Yeah.

24 MR. GREG YOUNG: At that time, the
25 majority of people that showed up at that meeting

1 for public comment, their main concern was overhead
2 power lines running throughout the area. And they
3 were assured -- although it has no bearing on this
4 group, they were assured by the previous group there
5 would be absolutely no overhead power lines, they
6 would all be buried.

7 I know that's a big concern. I
8 personally support the town board members that would
9 like to see all of their lines buried in the
10 right-of-way. I can't speak to the right-of-way
11 that's going to travel through the county ditches
12 right now because there are some legal things that
13 are being discussed.

14 But I would hopefully -- if it's a more
15 intense cost for the project, I'd like to see those
16 exact figures broken out and give the people,
17 because of all the disadvantages that they've
18 mentioned, the reason why we can't bury the lines,
19 and maybe that's a possibility. Like I said, right
20 now the county ordinance for smaller projects
21 requires that to be done on the right-of-way.

22 That was it, I guess. Thank you.

23 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you so much
24 for your comments tonight. As I said, I think the
25 applicant does need to put more information into the

1 record on this, specifically your reasoning for
2 wanting them overhead. I think the application does
3 not adequately address the rationale for overhead.

4 Also, something that needs to be in the
5 record to do an analysis is the width of the
6 right-of-way and what can actually fit in the
7 right-of-way and whether any private easements are
8 necessary for the feeder lines.

9 This is a small project, relatively
10 speaking to a lot of other projects I see at the
11 state, it's 36 megawatts. This is a very large
12 site, so things are spread out, so there are a lot
13 of feeder lines.

14 So I think Collin does have something he
15 wants to add, so go ahead.

16 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: I definitely hear
17 that, you know, overhead lines are not the
18 prettiest, underground there's no effect visually,
19 and it's certainly easier. However, the costs of
20 underground lines as opposed to overhead lines, and
21 these are numbers that I'm remembering from what my
22 boss told me a few weeks ago, but about \$500,000 a
23 mile for underground versus \$150,000 for overhead.

24 So if we're looking at something along
25 the lines of 12 miles of underground in addition to

1 what we planned, that's, you know, an extra
2 \$6 million, which a 36-megawatt project probably
3 doesn't support. So the project, you know, maybe
4 doesn't happen if we have to go all underground.

5 So I definitely hear your concerns. I
6 wish that we could do all underground as well, but
7 the project doesn't happen if we have to do that.

8 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you, Collin,
9 for the position of the applicant on that line.

10 The Public Utilities Commission will be
11 making the decision on feeder lines, on whether they
12 should be overhead or underground, and building the
13 record around this issue would help them make that
14 issue -- make that decision.

15 Again, if cost is the concern of the
16 applicant you would need to submit information into
17 the record on the costs and why that could possibly
18 kill the project, I think that needs to be included.
19 And, again, the Public Utilities Commission will be
20 making the decision on whether they're overhead or
21 underground. So if people have concerns about that,
22 please weigh in tonight or write in.

23 The substation location is also something
24 that is part of the permit, it's an associated
25 facility. If the substation location is a concern

1 for people as well, that's something we want to hear
2 about.

3 So, again, wasn't there -- did you have a
4 question over here on this side of the room?

5 Yes.

6 MR. JIM MEYER: I need you to explain to
7 me the shadow flicker that everybody's so concerned
8 about.

9 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Oh, yes. Could I
10 get your name?

11 MR. JIM MEYER: Jim Meyer.

12 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Jim Meyer, and he
13 asked me to explain the shadow flicker.

14 Shadow flicker occurs -- it's really --
15 the turbine creates a shadow, as a building would
16 create a shadow. However, the turbines are
17 spinning. So you have three blades and they're
18 spinning and so that's where you get the flicker.

19 MR. JIM MEYER: What does that hurt?

20 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Well, that's a
21 good question, he asked what does that hurt. The
22 science is inconclusive on the health effects from
23 shadow flicker. The Public Utilities Commission
24 does have an open docket on the health effects from
25 noise and they also briefly discuss the shadow

1 flicker in that docket.

2 There wasn't any conclusion to the issue.
3 These issues have been raised around wind farms
4 around the world. There's a lot of data on it.
5 Some of the concerns are that it could cause
6 migraines, it could create poor health. I am not a
7 doctor, but something about like the inner ear or
8 something, tinnitus, I think, is what it's called.

9 Because the science isn't conclusive we
10 don't know if it actually causes health effects. It
11 could be something similar to where different people
12 are going to react differently. You know, it
13 probably doesn't affect everyone the same.

14 But it does kind of create a strobe. So
15 it depends on the orientation of the window,
16 whether's a tree in front of it. Of course, you can
17 turn down the shade, pull down the shade and block
18 the shadow flicker from coming into your home, but
19 it could be on your deck and you might want to enjoy
20 your deck at sunset and there if you have a lot of
21 shadow flicker, kind of the strobe light type
22 effect, kind of going on and off while you're
23 cooking a hamburger or something. And, you know, at
24 the very least it could be annoying.

25 There are ways to mitigate it, there are

1 ways to -- again, planting trees, shades on windows,
2 and in the micrositing process, just kind of moving
3 the turbine a little bit so that you don't have the
4 turbine kind of hitting the house at a certain time.

5 But it looks like it can really affect
6 different homes differently, where some homes may
7 get just a total of five hours of shadow flicker a
8 year, some may get none, some might get over 40
9 hours of shadow flicker a year. It really depends
10 on how close the turbine is sited to the house and
11 the orientation of the turbine to the home. So
12 that's kind of the controversy around shadow
13 flicker.

14 And I realize there aren't that many wind
15 turbines in this area. You have two
16 commercial-sized turbines, but this is something
17 that's relatively new to Faribault County. So, you
18 know, there are turbines in nearby counties,
19 however, if you wanted to look at a wind farm there.
20 And I know I have driven up to quite a few of them
21 and listened to them and watched them. However, I
22 don't live next to one so I don't know what that's
23 like.

24 Yes.

25 MS. LAURA LARSON: My name is

1 Laura Larson. I live in Jo Daviess Township. There
2 are two wind turbines proposed right across from the
3 end of my driveway.

4 As many of you in here know, I have a
5 boarding kennel, which I take care of people's pets
6 when they are away. I also train horses. As many
7 of you know, I also compete. So part of my
8 livelihood would be the boarding kennel and training
9 horses.

10 So the question about shadow flicker: Go
11 like this with your eyes: Close, open, close, open,
12 close, open. Okay. The turbines are going to be
13 west of my property. I spend safely eight hours a
14 day outside, most of that from noon on. So
15 basically I'm outside from the time the sun is up
16 here until the sun is down here (indicating). I'm
17 going to get flicker, okay.

18 When I train young horses and there's
19 something flashing like this (indicating), which is
20 what flicker is, imagine how that affects -- how my
21 horses respond to that light, okay.

22 For my dog kennel, my boarding facility,
23 I tie dogs out on cables so they can get fresh air,
24 exercise, just get outside. This is what they see
25 when they're tied outside (indicating), that

1 flicker. Okay. That negatively affects my business
2 because the animals are not in a stable environment
3 where they're not affected by that sort of thing,
4 okay.

5 That's what I got from doing the research
6 on flicker. Yeah, they don't have any -- proven
7 anything from it, but just use your imagination and
8 your common sense and you'll get what I'm talking
9 about about flicker. If I wasn't outside and it
10 didn't affect me, then I probably wouldn't even be
11 standing here.

12 I'm also concerned about -- on a
13 different subject -- the safety of everyone on the
14 roads that we drive on every day. As you well know
15 from driving in tonight, our roads are not good
16 right now. And you know what's going to happen when
17 big trucks drive down our roads, they're already bad
18 to begin with, they're going to get worse.

19 There are roads in our township that I
20 cannot safely travel down with my car because I'll
21 either get stuck or it will wreck the bottom of my
22 car, okay. Imagine big trucks driving down these
23 roads, they're not going to get any better, okay.

24 What is your name again?

25 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: Collin Rudeen.

1 MS. LAURA LARSON: Collin, I think we've
2 met before, have we not?

3 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: I think so.

4 MS. LAURA LARSON: And it wasn't a very
5 pleasant experience, was it, Collin? It wasn't a
6 good way to meet. And that's a safety issue all in
7 itself, which I'm pretty sure will never happen
8 again; am I right?

9 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: I will never park in
10 that particular spot on the road again.

11 MS. LAURA LARSON: Excellent. Excellent.
12 So I think people who are on the Exergy project
13 don't realize what it's like for some of us to live
14 out in a really quiet community with hardly any
15 traffic and we think about safety issues different
16 than they think about them. I hope everybody
17 realizes how much traffic will be involved with this
18 project if it moves forward.

19 As you've heard many times tonight,
20 they'll take it into consideration, but you've also
21 heard that if it costs too much money they're not
22 going to do it. So if road restoration costs too
23 much money we're not going to get it, right?
24 Granted, I'm the minority here, but I still think
25 that I have a lot to say about the project when I

1 live within falling distance of a turbine.

2 Thanks.

3 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you so much
4 for your comments. I do have a couple of things to
5 say. First, if it costs them too much money, we can
6 still require it. And if they can't pay for it,
7 then that's their problem, not the state's. So we
8 do have the ability to set requirements and
9 conditions, we call them permit conditions, that
10 they do have to meet.

11 Second, on shadow flicker on animals, you
12 know, unfortunately, this isn't an area that's well
13 developed. At best, we have anecdotal information
14 on it. So that is something that I am personally
15 looking into to develop in the record. However,
16 there is, unfortunately, just not a lot of data out
17 there.

18 Roads, that is a very important issue. I
19 too almost got stuck today driving the site. They
20 are required -- roads, that is a big deal in these
21 projects. There are a lot of trucks, there's a lot
22 of hauling, these wind turbines are very, very
23 large. We just passed a couple of blades moving on
24 the highway on the way down and it's a semi per
25 blade with another truck following it. This is a

1 pretty big deal.

2 Section 7.8 in the draft site permit
3 addresses roads. It does require that the permittee
4 prior to the use of such roads make satisfactory
5 arrangements with the appropriate state, county, or
6 township governmental body having jurisdiction over
7 roads to be used for construction of the project and
8 for maintenance and repair of roads that will be
9 subject to extra wear and tear due to transportation
10 of equipment and project components.

11 So they are required to work with the
12 government entities that have jurisdiction of those
13 roads to make those roads whole. They can't damage
14 the roads and, to the displeasure of the government
15 that controls those roads, and walk away. That
16 would be a permit violation. However, we do rely on
17 local units of government to bring that information
18 forward. If they are dissatisfied with the repairs
19 of a road, to bring that information forward.

20 In this permit, the Commission also has
21 the ability to amend or revoke the permit at any
22 time. So if the applicant at this point, if they
23 were issued a permit, then the permittee, if they
24 did not make the roads whole to the satisfaction of
25 local governments, there is a possibility that the

1 permit could be revoked and then they don't have the
2 authority to have those turbines there at that
3 location.

4 So it's a really big deal for the
5 applicant to make those roads whole. It's certainly
6 not in their financial interest to leave any damage
7 on those roads and to not repair all those roads and
8 make those whole. But that is a concern. Fagen,
9 the construction company, is here if they want to
10 make a couple of comments on roads. I don't know if
11 you do or if you don't.

12 But typically speaking, yeah, the
13 construction company will notify -- the residents
14 will be notified of what's happening when so you'll
15 be prepared for the construction activities because
16 it is, yes, it's a big deal.

17 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: Can I?

18 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Yeah, Collin does
19 want to add something perhaps on their thoughts on
20 roads.

21 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: Yeah, roads, and I
22 know, Laura and Jason, I understand what you're
23 saying, you don't to have -- you don't want to be
24 impacted by the project, and you will be.

25 But I know we've worked really hard to

1 minimize those impacts. I've personally spent hours
2 moving turbines around, running the simulations on
3 noise and shadow flicker, and then making
4 adjustments to get it to the lowest that I can. And
5 I believe from -- on your house there was .015 hours
6 of shadow flicker per year that was modeled, and if
7 you're out there from noon onwards then you'll see
8 half of it.

9 And we've also modeled the noise based on
10 data provided by the turbine manufacturer. And it
11 takes into account where the turbines are, some of
12 the landscape, and the combined effects from
13 multiple turbines. And I think it's around 35
14 decibels is the impact you'll hear from the turbines
15 on your particular house, which is about the noise
16 level of a quiet whisper at a library.

17 And I'm not trying to belittle your
18 concerns or anything like that, because I understand
19 you don't want to have the project, you don't want
20 to have the impacts that are associated with it.
21 But I would like to stress that we've done the best
22 that we can to minimize those impacts.

23 UNIDENTIFIED: I don't mean just us, I
24 mean everybody.

25 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: Yeah, I understand

1 that.

2 UNIDENTIFIED: When half these leases are
3 probably not even -- nonresidents that don't live in
4 the township, but it will affect somebody else.

5 MS. WOOLSTENHULME: That's not true.

6 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: Can I just take one
7 more minute?

8 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Sure.

9 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: To address the roads,
10 we are required by Faribault County to assess the
11 quality of the roads currently and put up a bond for
12 damages to those roads. So if we are really a bad
13 neighbor and beat up the roads and then walk away,
14 you've got our bond money so you will be able to fix
15 the roads no matter what we do.

16 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: I was just going
17 to make a comment on the lease. The state -- you
18 know, this is a public meeting, the state does not
19 involve itself in the leases between the developer
20 and the residents. I do realize that there are
21 probably some absentee landlords, but, again, that's
22 the state -- the lease agreements are between two
23 private parties and the state does not participate
24 in those lease agreements.

25 MS. SHIRLEY HANNAMAN: My name is

1 Shirley Hannaman.

2 And I probably won't have a ride home
3 tonight, but I want to thank you for being here. I
4 want to thank Exergy for all the work that you've
5 done. We've waited for this project to go through
6 for -- since 2003. And myself, I would rather have
7 one wind turbine out in my front yard than I would
8 like a nuclear plant 500 miles away. I just -- I'm
9 just for these wind turbines.

10 And most of these people here are farmers
11 like me and don't like to get up, and if just
12 everybody would just raise their hand that are for
13 this to give you an idea how many are really for
14 this project, raise your hand high. Just to give
15 you an idea, because not everybody's going to get up
16 and talk and, like, I'm nervous right now, but I had
17 to do this.

18 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Could you spell
19 your name?

20 MS. SHIRLEY HANNAMAN: H-A-N-N-A-M-A-N.

21 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you, and
22 thank you for your comments. We don't take a poll,
23 just so everybody in the audience knows, of who's
24 for it and who's against it and it's not any concern
25 of the state.

1 What we look at is what you think the
2 conditions should be in the draft site permit and if
3 you have any questions on our process and any
4 questions about the -- concerns about the project
5 and -- that should be addressed in the draft site
6 permit.

7 Again, the draft site permit really is --
8 this is the legal instrument, the tool that, you
9 know, that is -- that the permittee, the applicant
10 in this case, Exergy, would have to comply with. I
11 mean, this is -- these are the tools in the toolbox,
12 this is the toolbox, and these provisions are the
13 tools. So that's what we're really looking at, is
14 whether you think that these provisions in the draft
15 site permit are adequate.

16 Yes.

17 MR. JIM MEYER: Jim Meyer, again.

18 What happens when the time comes that the
19 people that Exergy sells this project to and we come
20 up with another form of energy, and the people that
21 bought the project says we don't want it anymore?
22 We're talking away from it and we've got this great
23 big tower sticking up in our field. Who's going to
24 pay for taking that down and get rid of the
25 concrete?

1 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: I can answer that.
2 Again, the draft site permit would be issued to the
3 permittee. In this case, it's Exergy Development,
4 of Idaho. Now, if they sell this project to another
5 developer they would have to come before the Public
6 Utilities Commission to transfer the permit.

7 The permit holder is the one that's
8 responsible for the project. The permit requires
9 that the permittee either have a power purchase
10 agreement or some other enforceable mechanism in
11 place to sell the power before they start
12 construction. So, to be clear, they can't build the
13 project without having a way to sell the power.

14 In this case, they do have a PPA, they
15 have a power purchase agreement with a utility to
16 purchase the energy. If the power purchase
17 agreement is with a Minnesota utility, that
18 Minnesota utility has to come before the Public
19 Utilities Commission on a docket to hear issues
20 surrounding the power purchase agreement and whether
21 it's a fair price for ratepayers. That's another
22 matter and not before us today.

23 But in terms of who's going to clean up
24 the turbines if they just leave, they can't just
25 leave, that's the whole issue with the permit. The

1 permit holder, whether it's Exergy or whether
2 they've transferred the permit to some other
3 company, the permit holder is required to
4 decommission the project and restore the site. And,
5 again, the permit language here is what they have to
6 do.

7 So if you feel that the site restoration
8 isn't adequate in here, again, we encourage you to
9 comment. You can write your comments in, as well as
10 the decommissioning plan, if you think that's not
11 adequate. What really -- in practice what we do is
12 they're required in their application to say what
13 they're going to do for decommissioning, and then we
14 hold them to that. And if you think what they said
15 in their application isn't sufficient, usually it's
16 posting a bond for scrap value at some point, you
17 know, year 10 or year 15, something like that. If
18 you think that isn't sufficient, again, that's
19 something we want to hear about.

20 For site restoration, typically they have
21 to go down so many feet, for some reason I'm
22 thinking it's four feet, but it's right here in
23 section 9.2. So it is addressed, decommissioning
24 and site restoration in the permit. Again, the
25 permit -- the language that they have to abide to,

1 but in the permit also is this little catchall
2 phrase that says they have to abide by anything they
3 say in their application. So if they've committed
4 to the decommissioning plan that they laid out in
5 their application, because there's a catchall phrase
6 in the permit that requires them to abide by
7 whatever they commit to in the application, then
8 that's the decommissioning plan they have to use.
9 And if the permit is transferred to someone else,
10 that's still the decommissioning plan that they have
11 to use.

12 MR. JIM MEYER: So they have to carry a
13 bond to have money enough to do this in case the
14 thing fails?

15 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: So he asked if
16 they had to carry a bond and whether that's enough
17 money to cover the cost if this fails. I believe in
18 their permit application they did say something
19 about posting money, it's usually in the back here.
20 So -- to assure the project will meet its obligation
21 to dismantle the wind project, the applicant will
22 either establish -- so they'll do a couple of
23 different things. They will either establish a
24 decommissioning fund in the amount of \$25,000 per
25 wind turbine generator to be held in escrow for the

1 benefit of the landowners, provide the landowners a
2 corporate guarantee of the project's decommissioning
3 obligations from a company with an investment grade
4 credit rating, or provide similar security
5 acceptable to landowners. The applicant will
6 establish the decommissioning security during the
7 seventh year of the project. So that will be an
8 obligation, a compliance that they will have to do
9 in year seven.

10 The applicant's lease agreements with the
11 landowners provide that all project facilities will
12 be removed following the end of a project's useful
13 life. The applicant also reserves the right to
14 explore alternatives regarding project
15 decommissioning at the end of the project site's
16 permit term. One such option may be to reapply for
17 a site permit and continue operation of the project,
18 provided energy is sold under a new long-term
19 contract or on a merchant basis.

20 Retrofitting the turbines and power
21 systems with upgrades based on new technology may
22 allow the wind farm to produce energy efficiently
23 and successfully for many more years.

24 So how we deal with any conflicting
25 information from the site permit application to the

1 permit, whichever is stronger prevails. So if the
2 permit language in the site draft permit -- or the
3 final site permit is more stringent, then that
4 language is going to prevail.

5 For example, if we require them to
6 restore up to the depth of four feet and their
7 application just says three, we're going to make
8 them do four, obviously. But the draft site permit
9 does not say anything about when they have to
10 establish a decommissioning fund and by how much.
11 So in that case, we would be looking to what they
12 said in the application.

13 And if anybody feels this is
14 insufficient, again, this is a time to raise your
15 concerns or to write comments on whether you feel
16 that's sufficient or not.

17 Yes.

18 MR. GREG YOUNG: Greg Young again. So
19 this is an LLC corporation that's building this
20 project?

21 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: This is an LLC
22 corporation that is building the project, that's
23 correct. That's a limited liability company.

24 MR. GREG YOUNG: So basically what
25 they're asking is for some kind of guaranteed surety

1 that this project -- if they walk away from the
2 project that it's going to be cleaned up? Nothing
3 that's been said so far has addressed that.

4 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Could I get your
5 name for the record?

6 MR. GREG YOUNG: Greg Young.

7 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Greg Young?

8 MR. GREG YOUNG: Yes.

9 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Yes. The
10 decommissioning plan --

11 MR. GREG YOUNG: But if they're an LLC,
12 who's going to decommission it? If they leave,
13 they're gone, right?

14 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: No. Oh, no. No.
15 No.

16 MR. GREG YOUNG: No. Are you going to
17 put them in jail or what?

18 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: If they leave they
19 have the obligation to this permit that they have to
20 meet.

21 MR. GREG YOUNG: But how are you going to
22 enforce the obligations if they no assets to enforce
23 against?

24 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: If they're
25 bankrupt?

1 MR. GREG YOUNG: Yes.

2 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: You know, that
3 really is a good question. This has not occurred in
4 Minnesota to date. That's not to say it won't ever
5 happen. In my background I do have -- a long, long,
6 long, long time ago, I remember working on this
7 issue a little bit in the mining industry when
8 similar concerns were raised. That's not the first
9 time I heard this concern, either. That is
10 something we can look at addressing in the draft
11 site permit.

12 MR. GREG YOUNG: Thank you.

13 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Yeah.

14 Other questions or concerns?

15 MR. GREG YOUNG: Perhaps a response from
16 the people here.

17 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Actually, yes. I
18 think that's a good idea. So what are your plans if
19 you do file for bankruptcy? So you'll put up this
20 money at year seven, it looks like, or something
21 you'll do at year seven, it's not quite clear what
22 you're going to do at year seven, but you'll do
23 something. So how would you ensure that if you were
24 bankrupt or -- what would you do?

25 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: I guess I don't have

1 a number for how much of a bond we would put up.
2 However, I would say that generally the scrap value
3 of the turbine, just the tons and tons of steel, is
4 generally worth more than the cost of taking it
5 down. So it's a net positive value even if it's not
6 working at all.

7 Do you guys want to add anything or --

8 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: That is a common
9 response. A statement I hear from wind developers
10 is that the scrap metal is worth more, so that would
11 cover the cost of dismantling the turbines. But
12 it's worth noting that, you know, these could be
13 up -- the permit is 30 years, what happens if
14 20 years from now the scrap metal isn't worth as
15 much? I mean, there are issues where in today's
16 value -- I mean, today that might be the case, but
17 what happens at year 20?

18 There aren't any easy answers to these
19 questions, so we really appreciate that these issues
20 are being raised and these comments will be included
21 into the record.

22 Yes, another comment, question.

23 MR. DUANE ERIC: Duane Eric (phonetic),
24 director of our local electric co-op.

25 Again, a comment on the underground or

1 overhead. Sure, the initial expense is greater on
2 underground, but I know last winter we had a lot of
3 outages because of ice and wind and that, which you
4 don't have with underground. So on overhead, like I
5 said, the initial expense is higher on underground,
6 but your upkeep is a lot less.

7 Thank you.

8 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you for
9 those comments.

10 Yes.

11 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: Dennis Paschke,
12 P-A-S-C-H-K-E.

13 No one's addressed loss of property value
14 in -- well, anybody, but also the nonparticipating
15 like the Larsons and myself. I read a Texas study
16 that shows up to perhaps a 30 percent drop. Do you
17 know of any studies in Minnesota by realty
18 associations or whatever that have a response to
19 that?

20 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: That is a good
21 question. Property values is an issue that's raised
22 at almost every project, wind project that's being
23 proposed in Minnesota. Stearns County addressed
24 this issue. Stearns County had never seen a wind
25 project, all of a sudden they started moving in and

1 Stearns County was like, oh, boy, you know. So they
2 had an ordinance, but they were looking at redoing
3 their ordinance and they did a -- you know, I
4 wouldn't use the word study because study kind of
5 implies it's peer-reviewed. And what they did is
6 they looked to county assessors and I think real
7 estate agents, but I can't remember. I have the
8 study on file. I think if you go to the Stearns
9 County website you can find it as well. They did
10 not find any impacts on property values.

11 Now, some studies have found a reduction
12 in property values, some have not. One study that
13 we -- that was peer-reviewed that did a very
14 thorough job at looking at sites with wind turbines
15 and comparing it to areas without wind turbines and
16 they took into account all these various variables,
17 and I haven't referred to the study in a while so I
18 hope I'm not getting the name wrong, but it's the
19 Lawrence Berkeley study on property values. That is
20 one that the state does look to, and that's kind of
21 inconclusive.

22 I think that, particularly now, it is
23 hard to single out a factor on this is the cause of
24 a reduction in property values. It seems like it's
25 a very complicated issue. Property values is

1 something that we do hear a lot about, it is not a
2 permit condition, there isn't a permit condition
3 that prohibits that, you know, if the property
4 reduction goes down by so much that something would
5 happen.

6 Again, I think it's something that's very
7 difficult to point to that this was a cause of a
8 reduction in property values. So the site permit is
9 silent on the issue of property values.

10 But just so you know, as part of the
11 process, the site permit process, there will be
12 findings of fact on this project that the Commission
13 will adopt. And it is dealing with a lot of issues
14 that were raised in the project, a lot things about
15 the project. This also becomes part of the order
16 that the Commission issues, so it is part of the
17 order, the findings of fact, but it is not a permit
18 condition. But we do hear a lot of comments on that
19 issue.

20 Yes.

21 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: Thank you.

22 Dennis Paschke.

23 With response to that, when the
24 legislature commissioned the Minnesota Health
25 Department to do its White Paper on the health

1 effects of wind farms, their results, too, were
2 somewhat inconclusive. But I think if you read
3 between the lines there it implies that perhaps the
4 decibel C scale should be the one used for measuring
5 wind noise and we're currently using the dBA scale.

6 Since flicker has got inconclusive
7 findings right now, as you just said property values
8 had inconclusive findings right now, noise is
9 somewhat inconclusive and you can read both sides of
10 the issue up and down. If in the future these
11 studies are found to affect us more so than we now
12 realize, will existing wind farms be grandfathered
13 in to the current applications or might the PUC
14 consider making retroactive obligations on them to
15 protect the health and financial welfare of the
16 particularly nonparticipating people in all of the
17 statewide wind farms areas?

18 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: You know, that is
19 a really good question. Again, the Public Utilities
20 Commission can amend the site permit at any time.
21 So if there is new data that presents itself that,
22 you know, and, you know, there's a fix, for example,
23 to reduce the noise and it's become the industry
24 standard and these old wind farms that don't have
25 this fix on their -- you know, I'm oversimplifying

1 it, to be sure, but they can come in and amend the
2 permit and require such a thing.

3 Something like this has not occurred
4 since the Public Utilities Commission has been
5 issuing permits. And in terms of noise on the C
6 scale, yeah, that's correct. The Minnesota
7 Pollution Control Agency, which is the agency that
8 governs the noise standard, it's the A scale and
9 that's something that the industry has always had to
10 comply with, noise on the A scale.

11 Yes, turbines, you know, seem to be
12 producing a low-frequency noise that some people are
13 more sensitive to than others.

14 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: And animals.

15 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: And animals, we
16 don't know. I think sometimes with some animals
17 they have more of a high frequency, some might have
18 more low frequency. I'm certainly no expert on what
19 animals are subject to, but I know with dogs it's
20 kind of more high. But that's a good question on
21 what are we doing in terms of addressing this issue.

22 Well, the Commission in the last year has
23 required developers who receive permits, and this
24 doesn't affect every developer but it does affect
25 some, that they have to do a study, a

1 postconstruction noise study, and measure the noise
2 on different frequencies.

3 Now, we just had two wind farms that
4 these are the first two to do their noise protocols
5 on how they're going to do this study, and it's the
6 Bent Tree Wind Farm and the Elm Creek II Wind Farm
7 that are going to be doing these studies. And the
8 noise protocol was just recently approved by the
9 Public Utilities Commission and we hope to learn
10 from these studies of what the impacts are of
11 low-frequency noise, and that's where we're at on
12 low-frequency noise.

13 So, again, on shadow flicker, the reason
14 why we require, you know, some analysis by the
15 application -- by the applicant on shadow flicker,
16 again, we're trying to learn.

17 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: So if the
18 postconstruction that the companies do, they put a
19 tower 50 feet too close to a home, the
20 postconstruction dB reading shows that it's in
21 excess of 50 dB, can they not operate that tower?

22 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: You know, again, a
23 good question. So, you know, the postconstruction
24 study is -- you know, I can't speak for every
25 developer on how they design their postconstruction

1 studies, but generally speaking they're not out at
2 every home and measuring to see if they comply with
3 the noise standard. It's usually, you know, a
4 couple of sites to do that.

5 This particular site permit, you can look
6 at the language for the postconstruction noise study
7 and it is to kind of take some information on
8 different frequencies, different distances, and
9 different feet.

10 Now, whether they're -- you know, I don't
11 have the noise study -- I mean the noise rule in
12 front of me, but I believe -- I know I'm on the
13 record, but I think you can -- I think there's
14 something where it's not 100 percent 365 days you
15 have to be in compliance with the noise standard, I
16 think, but I'm not sure on that.

17 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: I thought state
18 statute said 50 dB?

19 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: It's 50 dBA at
20 nighttime as a rule, and that's the nighttime
21 standard. But I don't know if that -- I can't speak
22 on the record of whether that -- if there isn't --
23 but they do have to meet that 50 dBA, but I don't
24 know.

25 You know, their consultant is here, or

1 maybe, Exergy, you might want to address on what
2 you're doing on noise? Or have you thought about
3 your postconstruction noise study design since you
4 will be going into construction soon if you are
5 issued a permit?

6 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: I don't have a
7 comment right now.

8 MS. WOOLSTENHULME: We're in the process
9 of writing that right now.

10 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Okay. So they're
11 in the process of putting together the noise
12 protocols. This is also a compliance filing, by the
13 way, they would have to post it on eDockets.

14 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: Once we set that
15 standard, if the tower exceeds it, if I take my own
16 measurements on my property because I'm not one of
17 their samples, can they operate that tower?

18 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Again, that's
19 something where I can't give you a yes or no answer
20 at this meeting. I think that there would -- the
21 PCA would probably send somebody out and verify the
22 measurements. My guess would be that the
23 measurement would be verified somehow.

24 And then there would be the enforcement
25 provisions on the PCA side, which I'm less familiar

1 with, and if they're in violation of it, certainly
2 they're in violation of a permit condition if
3 they're in violation of the noise standard. And to
4 that I can speak to and if they're violating a
5 permit condition then they can get their permit
6 revoked.

7 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: So they would have
8 to shut down the tower?

9 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: I can't answer
10 whether they would have to shut down the tower or
11 whether they would have to do some other type of
12 noise mitigation.

13 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: But if you pulled
14 the permit, they couldn't operate the project?

15 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Exactly, if we
16 pulled the permit, but there would probably be some
17 type of process allowed in there. Again, this
18 hasn't occurred yet in Minnesota, and that's not to
19 say it would never happen. There would probably be
20 some type of process in there where they would have
21 time to mitigate that.

22 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: Okay.

23 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: So other questions
24 or concerns? These are all really good comments and
25 concerns.

1 Yes. Do you want to come up to the mic
2 up here?

3 MR. RON GREIMANN: I'm Ron Greimann.

4 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Could you spell
5 your last name?

6 MR. RON GREIMANN: G-R-E-I-M-A-N-N.

7 For those of you who don't know, the
8 substation is going to go on our -- next to my
9 mother's land, right next to my home site, which
10 we've negotiated back and forth several times.
11 Without that in place, the project's dead.

12 I do, though, on behalf of our own
13 concerns, I want to go on record in support of
14 burying the power lines. I'd like to support the
15 decision of the township and ask that the county has
16 already set a precedent for it, in my mind. As it
17 progressed, I've been in favor of it, for the better
18 good. But also I'm going to be affected probably as
19 closely by the -- there is no 1,000-foot setback,
20 and we've gone back and forth and they've done their
21 best to make it -- it isn't exactly what I wanted,
22 but we've agreed to it, okay. But I do want to go
23 on record in support of burying the power lines.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you so much

1 for your comments.

2 So other questions, comments about the
3 process, project, the draft site permit?

4 Yes. Do you want me to take the mic or
5 do you want to come up here?

6 MR. JIM WALSMAN: My name's Jim Walsman
7 (phonetic). I'm not a resident of Faribault County,
8 I live in Martin County in Pleasant Prairie
9 Township, which is very close to Jo Daviess
10 Township. And in the shadow flicker thing it says
11 that preconstruction meeting the permittee shall
12 provide data on the shadow flicker for each
13 residence of nonparticipating landowners and
14 participating landowners. Does that only mean in
15 Faribault County or can they just -- as long as I'm
16 in Martin County they forget about me or what?

17 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: You know, again,
18 that's a very good issue you raised.

19 MR. JIM WALSMAN: Because I'd like to get
20 on the mailing list.

21 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: You know,
22 generally speaking, it is within the box, within the
23 project boundary. However, we do realize that
24 people are impacted by shadow flicker outside, and
25 so that is something is, you know, in my mind,

1 discretionary. So that's something if I hear a
2 concern, which I am, then that's going in the record
3 and when -- if they are issued a permit and I'm
4 working with them on their shadow flicker
5 information I can make sure that they address shadow
6 flicker impacts on homes surrounding the project
7 boundary as well.

8 So you're over in Martin -- oh, yeah,
9 you're right on the edge, though, aren't you,
10 because this is right on the edge of Martin.

11 MR. JIM WALSMAN: About a quarter of a
12 mile.

13 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Yeah, so it's in
14 the record.

15 MR. JIM WALSMAN: So I'll be on the
16 mailing list, then?

17 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Actually, if you
18 could fill out to be on the mailing list -- you can
19 just take this card, fill it out, and give it to me
20 or Ray.

21 MR. JIM WALSMAN: Thank you.

22 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you.

23 Other questions, concerns, comments?

24 Yes.

25 MR. GREG MASTIN: Greg Mastin again,

1 speaking on my own behalf.

2 My question is, is their plans -- I've
3 heard of 18 wind towers, I've heard 24, is there
4 plans to down the road add windmills within this
5 boundary? I realize it would another permitting
6 process, but with all the talk about flicker, noise
7 and getting these things positioned, is there
8 thoughts of expanding this wind farm within this
9 boundary?

10 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: I'm going to turn
11 that over to Exergy. The project site is certainly
12 large enough to do so.

13 So go ahead.

14 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: I don't know if we
15 will or not. That's something we'd have to
16 reevaluate judging on how well this project goes
17 and, you know, the viability for the future of a
18 second phase. So I don't know at this time.

19 MR. GREG MASTIN: No plans at this time,
20 then?

21 MR. COLLIN RUDEEN: I don't know yet.

22 MS. WOOLSTENHULME: We'd like to. I
23 mean, of course we'd like to, but it really all
24 depends on how successful this project is. You
25 know, as of today we're just addressing the issues

1 of this project and really that's all we can speak
2 to.

3 MR. GREG MASTIN: So if you have the
4 infrastructure in place, the feeder lines and that,
5 you could add to them, add wind towers?

6 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: No, that would
7 be -- if they propose a second phase they would have
8 to go through the permitting process all over again
9 for that phase and that would require a different
10 set of associated facilities. So --

11 MR. GREG MASTIN: Okay. I guess maybe my
12 point is, if you're going to add on, there's been --
13 there's some concern about the overhead and
14 underground. If you're going to add on to it, it
15 reduces your cost per mile --

16 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Oh, I see.

17 MR. GREG MASTIN: -- in the long run for
18 this underground.

19 MS. WOOLSTENHULME: And just so
20 everybody's aware, it's not just about cost on the
21 underground line. It's also a question of operation
22 and maintenance. We know where those lines are, you
23 can see if there's a problem with those lines. And
24 with this project -- every project is different --
25 these turbines are spread out more, we've got more,

1 of course, area covered with those lines. And so
2 there's a lot to take into consideration with those
3 lines, whether they be aboveground or below ground.
4 Obviously, we'd all like to have underground lines.
5 Sometimes it's not feasible for a whole lot of
6 reasons. But, I mean, we look at all those reasons.
7 So by no means is it just a -- is it a monetary
8 issue, by no means.

9 MR. GREG MASTIN: Thank you.

10 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: And, again, the
11 Public Utilities Commission will -- may be making
12 the decision on whether the lines are buried or
13 whether they will be allowed to have them overhead.

14 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: Have you ever
15 required an LWECs to go underground completely?

16 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Yes.

17 Yes.

18 MR. JASON LARSON: Jason Larson again.

19 I worked in power lines, did underground
20 work, plowed cable. It's not an issue if there's a
21 maintenance problem, it's underground. The lines go
22 bad, you get a thumper out, hook on both ends, it
23 tells you within a foot. It's not a big problem to
24 cure.

25 Overhead, yeah, it's easy to see, it's

1 cheaper. But they're right, in the long run it pays
2 for itself. Maintenance is huge, way different than
3 your guy's country where you're coming from: Big
4 wind, big rain. But that's not that big a
5 difference to tell how to fix it. We've had
6 underground wires for years. Go on sites for other
7 windmill projects, again, they're all underground.
8 I haven't seen one yet where it's overhead.

9 MS. LIZ WOOLSTENHULME: I appreciate
10 that.

11 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Thank you.
12 Other comments, questions?

13 Yes. Do you want to take the mic?

14 MR. ROB WOLF: Rob Wolf.

15 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Can you spell it,
16 was it Wolf?

17 MR. ROB WOLF: W-O-L-F.

18 One question I think that came up along
19 with Mr. Mastin's question was if you're going to
20 expand on the project down the road, how many wind
21 turbines are allowed per acre or so many feet or
22 anything like that? That maybe is a concern people
23 haven't heard as far as a number.

24 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: If they expand the
25 project, again, they have to go for a separate

1 permit.

2 MR. ROB WOLF: That's what I mean.

3 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: So there isn't
4 what's allowed or what's not allowed. I mean, but
5 to be clear, the project boundary that they proposed
6 here is just for this project. So they could
7 propose one totally within this boundary, adjacent
8 to it, overlapping it, and it's just -- you're
9 starting from scratch doing this exact same thing
10 over and over, the exact same process with all this
11 information over again, but different for that
12 project.

13 Also, just so you know, this is a pretty
14 wide area. We do not preclude another developer, a
15 competitor, even, from coming in and getting a
16 permit for a wind farm in this same box. You know,
17 if they don't have the land -- for that land,
18 another developer does and they come in and apply
19 for a permit, then they could do that.

20 MR. ROB WOLF: I'm sorry, but that was a
21 non-answer.

22 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Can you repeat
23 your question, then?

24 MR. ROB WOLF: My question was: Under
25 ordinance, okay, you're the ordinance people, or the

1 county, how many can be put to an acre, how many
2 feet apart, anything like that, can they go?

3 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Sorry, I
4 misunderstood. The three-by-five setback also
5 applies for internally spaced turbines, that's
6 three-rotor diameter setback in a nonprevailing,
7 five-rotor diameter setback in the prevailing with a
8 20 percent fudge factor. We do allow 20 percent
9 wiggle room because sometimes with the terrain or
10 whatever you have going on, you can't always do it.
11 And it's internal spacing, it's not -- we're not
12 talking about a setback from a property line. From
13 a property line, from a nonparticipating, it's three
14 by five.

15 As far as I'm aware, in the history of
16 the state issuing site permits, it's never been
17 anything less. Well, maybe it started at three by
18 three or it could have five by five, I think it was
19 the same on both sides a long time ago, but that was
20 before my time, to be sure. So it is three- by
21 five-rotor diameter setback from nonparticipating
22 property lines, and that is a given.

23 When it comes from a residence, it's a
24 little trickier. It's the noise standard, more or
25 less. Generally speaking, it's 500 feet from a

1 residence or the noise standard, whichever is
2 greater. The noise standard is always greater than
3 500 feet. The noise standard can be anywhere
4 from -- you know, I've seen it anywhere from
5 700 feet to 1,500 feet. Now, I know some developers
6 claim it can be a little less than 600, I don't know
7 if that's the case. I think that -- and that was
8 just an initial modeling, not in the final at the
9 end of the day. So generally speaking, 700 to
10 1,500 feet from a residence.

11 Now, that said, the development of wind
12 farms and siting wind farms has kind of evolved over
13 the last couple of years, and developers like Exergy
14 are voluntarily going beyond that. And typically to
15 meet the county ordinance, the county does have an
16 ordinance here of 1,000-foot setback from
17 residences, so they voluntarily said, well, we're
18 going to do 1,000 feet and 1,500 feet from a
19 residence unless we get their okay to do 1,000, but
20 no less than 1,000. So that's now a permit
21 condition.

22 Generally, that's typically what we see
23 now from developers, but the noise standard is the
24 setback from residences.

25 I hope that answers your question.

1 MR. ROB WOLF: Yes, thank you.

2 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Okay. Thank you.
3 Other questions, comments?

4 May 6th, you have until May 6th to submit
5 your written comments. Grab a blue sheet, if you
6 don't already have one.

7 Any other questions or comments? I want
8 to be sure everybody has had their opportunity to
9 speak. Does everybody just want to go home?

10 Okay. Well, it looks like we've come to
11 a conclusion here. My contact information is in the
12 slide presentation. I do have a few cards out
13 front. I'm also, if you go to our website, which is
14 also on the slide presentation, you can find me.
15 It's not too hard to find me, I have a very unique
16 name, Ingrid Bjorklund, not too difficult to track
17 me down. So please call me with questions.

18 Get your comments in by May 6th. And if
19 you want to get on our mailing list, if you want to
20 hear about the process, about the progress of the
21 project through this process, please fill out one of
22 those purple cards to get on our mailing list so you
23 are assured you will be receiving mailings.

24 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: One more.

25 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: I think we're

1 wrapping it up, though.

2 MR. ROB WOLF: One last question. Since
3 you'll probably end up with overhead lines, how do
4 you work with Benco? In my case, do you put lines
5 on their same poles or do you sometimes jump across
6 the road, which would require new easements?

7 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Again, I'll just
8 quickly answer that. Just because they want
9 overhead lines doesn't mean they're going to get
10 overhead lines. The record is going to be developed
11 on that matter and the Public Utilities Commission
12 will be making the final determination.

13 Whether they can collocate with another
14 utility, that is something that they -- I don't know
15 if you want to address that question, it's a
16 possibility. Wind developers have done it before.
17 Generally speaking, utilities don't like it.

18 MR. DENNIS PASCHKE: Okay.

19 MS. INGRID BJORKLUND: Where those feeder
20 lines would go, again, that's part of this process
21 and what information I'm looking for from the
22 applicant to put into the record is the width of the
23 right-of-way and whether the right-of-way is even
24 sufficient enough to put those feeder lines in,
25 whether they be overhead or under-head, or whether

1 there would be the need for any private easements
2 for the feeder lines.

3 Okay. So that concludes tonight's
4 meeting. Thank you so much for coming out tonight,
5 and have a safe drive home.

6 (Hearing adjourned at 8:32 p.m.)

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