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STATE OF MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

DIVISION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

In the Matter of the Application of Prairie Wind Energy, LLC for a Certificate of Need for the 100 MW Prairie Wind Project in Otter Tail County

MPUC DOCKET NO. IP-6844/CN-10-429

The Prairie Event Center
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(Presentation by Mr. Birkholz)

MS. AMANDA SANVIK: As David said, my name is Amanda Sanvik, and many of you in this room already know me as I grew up here. And I'd just like to thank all of you for coming tonight and coming to see what the project has become, you know, moved forward, we've been working on this for four years, and we've been working through a lot of different things. We appreciate your time and coming to see what we're about.

MR. TERRY CARLSON: Also, I appreciate David coming up here and allowing us a chance to explain ourselves here.

In 2007 we started on this adventure into wind. And we were really thinking about doing a smaller scale wind farm in the area, and having looked at all the state and federal parameters, we decided that we're going to change our scope -- excuse me -- and go a little bit larger than first thought out. So we thought we were going to go to a 100 megawatt project.

The next step would be to go to the federal government and make sure that the transmission was available, so we contacted Midwest Independent Transmission Operator and started those

proceedings. And over the last two years, two and a half years, those have been going well. Our research and studies have showed that we have no issues on delivering electricity.

So after that first giant step we started the contracting phase of going after neighbors and other willing participants in this project. We tried to design a contract that was fair. I believe it still, you know, and having done this four years ago, even talking with wind farms just to the west of here 40 miles, we're still above average in payments for both the turbine fees and for wind rights agreements.

That's just one step in the entire process. And I'll let Amanda start talking about all the intricacies that go with that.

MS. AMANDA SANVIK: So you're probably wondering why it took four years to get to this point. And I was just speaking to a large developer out in California a couple weeks ago and he said they tell their clients a minimum of five years, it was going to be a minimum of five years before you're going to see anything even potentially built in a project area.

And the biggest thing, or the thing that

takes the longest time is siting, where can you put these turbines, there's so many parameters to look at. Talking with the landowners, if the landowners are interested. We do not have eminent domain, we're not a utility, we cannot take your land, we cannot mortgage your land. It's just the willing, if you want to participate and you're in the footprint you can participate.

The government, the State of Minnesota government has numerous setback requirements. Turbines must be at least 250 feet from all roads, a minimum of 500 feet from residences. But they also must meet noise requirements of the State of Minnesota, so we're required to model all of our turbine locations to make sure that they will indeed meet noise requirements, which is 50 decibels at outside of a residence in the evening time. We cannot place a turbine next to your house or close to your house if there's going to be any noise issues there.

Another setback is wildlife. We all know there's a lot of wildlife out here, a lot of you have Fish and Wildlife easements, there's a lot of Wildlife Management Program land, and there's 600 foot setbacks from areas such as that. There's

1,000 foot setbacks from lakes, rivers, things like that. We've met with the DNR, we've met with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, we've met with every government agency that you could possibly imagine that would have anything to do with a wind project to the land up here. And working with different government agencies, working with landowners, and doing different studies.

One other study that we worked on is a microwave beam path study. There's communication towers south of town, as we all know. We need to make sure we're placing turbines in a location that does not impact those microwave beam paths.

We're performing an analysis on, you know, shadow flicker. Shadow flicker is a huge buzz in the wind industry in all the neighborhoods that are looking at wind industry. There are shadow flicker modeling modules that will allow us to test that, it's a very detailed, very accurate program called WindPro that can tell us for each specific residence exactly how much shadow flicker they would have, there's a potential for that, and what time of day and what time of year that that would occur. It's only going to occur if it's sunny, it's only going to occur if the turbine is moving, there's a

lot of different details in that. Railroad setbacks. As you know, the railroad goes right through the project area.

So there's a lot of different scoping and a lot of different intricacies that go along with siting. Lowlands. And then there's just a fact of where is a good place to put a turbine. As well as irrigated land, what are the current agricultural practices, what is that landowner's intent for the future of that land, do they want to put an irrigator out there, have they thought of irrigation out there.

Aerial spraying is another huge concern in the area. How are those fields aerial sprayed, we've addressed that, we've talked to the aerial sprayer in the area. Just a lot of different intricacies that go into that and that takes most of the time.

It's just us doing this with a set of advisors. Most wind companies have a group, a huge group of staff that do this modeling, but we're really trying to, you know, do it ourselves and, you know, do the best job we can on that intricate detail and working with each landowner who is involved to make sure that they're putting turbines

in areas that they're comfortable with as well.

So that's the majority of what we've been doing for the past four years. You know, just the other stuff we've been doing is talking with contractors, subcontractors, as well as working and talking with utilities on proposals for them to purchase our power. So four years have flown by and that's where we're at today and working through the state permit with David.

MR. TERRY CARLSON: Yeah. One more I have here. Maybe you want to ask what's in it for Parkers Prairie? Well, hopefully it works out so that the project can get built. We haven't really gone public with this project because the vast majority of wind farms don't have the transmission, run out of capital, or they have to wait for a utility to come and offer them a purchase price to buy their power. So with all those parameters, you know, we've been somewhat quiet.

But today we've got this certificate of need meeting, which has to be done because of the initial scoping size. Anything over 50 megawatts has to go through the OES, Office of Energy Security, and meet their requirements, and they present it to the Public Utilities Commission to see

if it passes their muster.

So this is just the start of another long process and hopefully over the course of the next several months all the questions that you guys send in to David or to us or call us to ask, hopefully those questions are all addressed.

So with that we'll turn it back over to you Dave, thank you.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thank you.

(Presentation by Mr. Birkholz.)

(Public comments.)

MS. CLAUDIA LILJEGREN: My name is Claudia Liljegren. C-L-A-U-D-I-A, Liljegren, L-I-L-J-E-G-R-E-N.

I am appreciative of --

UNIDENTIFIED: We can't hear.

MS. CLAUDIA LILJEGREN: I am appreciative of the state and their efforts at setting expectations for wind farms. One of my concerns is that some of these expectations are not -- there continues to be complaints throughout the state or throughout the country about the use of wind farms that are apparently already running.

Specifically, one of the areas that are problematic is those that live within a two-mile

radius of the wind farm struggle with home devaluations. The fact that the property is within that two miles can see declines from 20 to 50 percent. Residents are moving out of the area with reduced values, while others are asking for lower property assessments.

Results indicate significant decline of the school and property tax base, which would result in increased local taxes. In addition, higher utility rates, since no energy is provided Prairie Wind will be available locally. All these issues would considerably impact Parkers' ability to thrive in these economic times and in our future.

Again, regarding the state expectations. There are different wind farms that are -- the residents in the area, again, within a couple miles, are engaged in lawsuits. One actually not that far from here, western Minnesota, where there are many, numerous farmers in that area that are suing.

There's also been good research that there are medical and health problems. Again, these wind farms are following state mandates, but there still continues to be problems in health and mental health areas. There was a team of physicians in New England who looked at adverse affects of wind

1 turbine noise on human health. They gathered
2 references over ten years from acoustic studies to
3 studies in medical journals on environmental health
4 and they documented numerous medical problems,
5 including physiopathology with increased heart
6 disease, cardiovascular complications, and potential
7 and even more far reaching implications with
8 children.
9 The World Health Organization has
10 published a listing of medical complications showing
11 large research-based studies that low frequency
12 turbine noise can lead to sleep deprivation,
13 headaches, nauseousness, dizziness, tinnitus,
14 hearing impairment, poor concentration, heart
15 palpitations and blurred vision. Also, with mental
16 health, which includes anxiety, increased
17 irritability, sexual impotence, changes in general
18 mood, depression, social conflicts, and psychosis.
19 Again, these wind farms are following the mandates
20 of the state.
21 There are also environmental hazards,
22 including our wildlife, including our migratory
23 birds, as well as hawks, eagles and cranes when they
24 are on their updraft and they get splattered from
25 the turbines.

There are other less disturbing impacts, like day and nighttime strobe lights, loss of amenity, unavoidable noise, and an unaesthetic view, heavy duty roads and increase of transformers and power lines.

So I guess my question is how would this benefit the community?

There's also been more and more research about the effectiveness of wind turbines. There's more and more research on doing thermal as well as natural gas, the energy it takes, it takes carbons to initiate and sustain wind energy and wind energy has oftentimes gone into electricity and does not help for any kind of vehicle fuel or anything like that.

My understanding is that -- and I might be wrong, but there's excessive amounts of energy -- I mean, electricity in the state already, and wind power often either provides excessive amounts that don't get capped or used, or it is too hard to get because of a lowered wind.

So that's what I had.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Maybe the next person can try this one and see if this microphone works a little better. Sorry for the sketchy microphone.

Thank you.

Who is the next person? This one you also have to hold close.

MR. RODNEY PETERSON: All right. My name is Rodney Peterson, R-O-D-N-E-Y, P-E-T-E-R-S-O-N.

I probably know most of you in here, you know I'm a potato farmer out in the area, so these towers are definitely an obstacle, an obstacle course to contend with.

And I met with Terry a couple different times over the past couple of years to try to relocate some of these things to make it more user friendly, but as you can see on the map, there's still a fair amount of work to be done in that area.

Then another issue of the -- or another area, I had run across an issue of the Todd Wadena newsletter, I'm sure there is people in here that get that, and if you read the February issue, there's a full page ad in here, or article, I should say, and it's written by the manager of the Minnesota Rural Electric Association. And I won't read the whole thing, but just a paragraph here that kind of says everything that needs to be said here.

In 2009 Minnesota utilities produced 3.4 billion kilowatts by capturing the wind. On average

1 utilities pay four and a half cents for each
2 kilowatt. This cost would be much higher if not for
3 the major federal tax subsidies for wind energy.
4 Since the wind tends to blow somewhat more at night
5 when it's not all that useful, the market only pays
6 an average of 2.7 cents for each kilowatt produced
7 by wind. Sometimes there was absolutely no market
8 for the wind and the utility had to pay another
9 utility to take the renewable kilowatts off their
10 hands with a loss of 1.8 cents per kilowatt spread
11 over 3.4 billion kilowatts and cost Minnesotans some
12 $62 million in 2009. And that's you, me, and
13 everybody else in this room and the state of
14 Minnesota, so it affects everybody by having wind.
15 So I took it one step further after I
16 read this article and I had my secretary take all my
17 power accounts from the four different power
18 companies that I deal with and she added up all the
19 kilowatts used in 2009 and 2010. And if you take
20 the kilowatts that I use times the 1.8 cents that
21 wind energy adds to the price of electricity, my
22 average of two years, it would cost me $21,000 each
23 year for wind farms. That's what wind farms have
24 done to us in Minnesota.
25 MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thank you.

MR. FRED LILJEGREN: Hello. Okay. My name is Fred Liljegren, L-I-L-J-E-G-R-E-N. I'm going to read this, if I can read my writing. Here we go.

My name is Fred Liljegren and we live on County Road 6 within the footprint of the proposed project. I have been offered both a contract and a wind lease agreement to accommodate the placement of wind turbines within said footprint. A review of these instruments led us to the conclusion that any revenue received as a result of our signatures would be negligible compared to what -- excuse me -- with the control the contract said we would have to relinquish. Not just for us, but for years to come affecting the lives of our descendants. Keep in mind, these instruments were written by lawyers hired by the proponents in their best interest, not necessarily ours.

Later an acquaintance peaked my interest by forwarding me a copy of a 2008 wind ordinance from Wisconsin. This 45-page document addressed issues such as health and safety concerns, setbacks, shadow flicker, and inadequate state regulations governing tower placement.

A little keyboard time on the old

computer and all of a sudden the what's-the-big-deal project becomes does anyone really know about this stuff?

I did not fabricate these concerns based on over work and a lack of sleep. I have a stack of articles and clippings from Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota voicing concerns over negative impacts. Remember, these are not the quaint windmills from the past that used to pump water on nearly every farm around here. These things are almost 500 feet high and rotor diameters as big as a football field like right across the road here.

And I'm not alone. Some of the other crazies that share my concerns include the World Health Organization, Minnesota Department of Health, and governing bodies in Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota.

In addition to these, I have a list of individuals who live close to the proposed towers that want nothing to do with them and believe they would be more of a detriment than a benefit to us. A little petition thing going here.

We have people here tonight that work for the State of Minnesota. They do their job, they get paid, and they go home. They don't live here. They

are the ones that are going to decide the fate of the project. Your opinions can be faxed. I'm reiterating for you here, your opinions can be faxed, mailed or e-mailed to Mr. Birkholz in St. Paul. The deadline for your input is May 10th. Don't be complacent, exercise your rights, speak your mind.

Thank you.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thank you. I can only support that we do welcome your comments. And also keep in mind that a lot of this discussion will be able to continue, the types of things this gentleman is bringing up today can be addressed before a judge and be entered into the record with the public hearing as well.

A lot of things we want to gather tonight are things that can help to do the environmental review as that parallel process goes on, but those questions and concerns need to be in the record as well.

Which mic do you want to take a risk on?

MR. BRENT MEINERT: My name is Brent Meinert, B-R-E-N-T, M-E-I-N-E-R-T. I'm a graduate from Parkers High School, 2004. I'm currently a student at Alexandria Technical Community College,

an energy technical specialist is the name of the degree. And I think that these folks trying to bring a new kind of economy to this town is a great thing. I'm going to be looking for a job here in about a year and I would love to have a place close to home that I could at least send an application to, you know. I've seen this town go downhill from the second I moved here with people moving out and not wanting to stay here because there's no opportunity.

And I really am sad to see all the pessimism. I'm not a farmer, I don't know what implications it would have to farmers, but, you know, I think that this town should work and try to survive through new economic times.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thank you. We will definitely have a range of opinions here from people who are very excited, people who are very nervous, people who are very concerned, people who are just interested to know more. So the discussion is good. But, again, it is stuff that we can continue to talk about over the course of the process.

MR. KEN PETERSON: Hello. My name is Ken Peterson, I'm with Peterson Aerial Spraying. And I'll spell my name, K-E-N, P-E-T-E-R-S-O-N.

And you guys probably all see aerial spraying going on in the area because I do quite a bit in this area. Actually, I started plotting how much I do and it ended up being about 20 percent of my business won't be able to be done if the wind towers go up the way they are placed right now, and another five percent within the boundary of the footprint area.

I know this is kind of a small map, I wish I had a bigger one, but I started coloring in the fields that I spray here for the local farmers and it covers about two-thirds of that area that's in the boundaries. It directly affected about 12,000 acres that I wouldn't be able to spray on a yearly basis and another 3,000 acres that would be affected. I don't know, it's about $100,000 worth of work for me that I wouldn't be able to do. And also it affects -- did the battery go dead?

And I'm not up here speaking against wind energy, but I am opposed to the placement of it. And the placement of the towers is going to directly affect -- is the mic going bad?

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Try this one.

MR. KEN PETERSON: The placement of the towers would directly affect whether a field could

be sprayed or not. You know, if you had the towers maybe lined up in a parallel direction it would make a difference as to whether the fields could be sprayed or not. How would that affect the farmers, you know, they wouldn't be able to treat their fields in a timely manner, the ones that I treat right now. And even if I do, even with like one tower being in the way, the met towers say, for instance, that monitors the wind that's up here already, has affected a couple of the fields. In fact, one of the fields I had to spray in two different directions and what it would do is increase the cost. Even if I could spray it, it is probably going to cost anywhere from 50 percent to twice as much for the farmers to be able to spray those fields, and that could be a way and the decision of whether they could even afford it or not.

And, you know, we spray these fields, a lot of times fields are too wet to go through with ground rigs. Or once the crop gets up too high and the canopy closes in the roads and you can't drive through the fields anymore and that's why the farmers need me to come in and treat their fields for them. We're treating them for disease, weeds,

1 insects, fertilize, we can do a lot of things by
2 air. And these diseases and insects can wipe out
3 fields within days, totally wipe out the crop.
4 So it is paramount that these fields be
5 accessible by air and be able to be treated by air.
6 It will directly affect the area and whether that
7 can happen or not.
8 And for the landowners who are putting up
9 these towers, it's going to affect whether a farmer
10 is going to be able to rent that land or not. If he
11 needs to have aerial spraying to be able to access
12 that field, he's not going to be able to spray if
13 there's towers in the way.
14 And you'd think that, you know, I could
15 fly around these towers, but it's hard, it's really
16 hard because I'm flying like 150 miles an hour, and
17 these towers are going by like bang, bang, bang.
18 And they're not just stationary, they're moving
19 targets besides. And they're huge, they're like 500
20 feet tall with a huge blade diameter. And I can't
21 get above them in the turns like I do most
22 obstacles, I have to fly in and amongst them.
23 And trying to keep track of where all
24 these towers are as I'm making a turn, plus I've got
25 hundreds of other things to watch, such as

monitoring my gauges on the engine parameters, watching the flow of the chemical and how, you know, the ground speed, air speed, all these things are all going through my head. Where people are on the ground in relation to me so that I can avoid them, and plus all these towers, it just adds a massive amount of mental trying to keep track of it all. And all it takes is one second of a lapse of where everything is and you're hitting something. And you only get one chance in my business, there's no reset button like on a video game, it's all over.

There has been recently an accident out in California where they hit a met tower that was unmarked and unseen by the pilot, and so these fatalities do occur. So that's how it would affect my business, it would take out about 25 percent of my business by these towers going up.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thank you.

MR. GARY PLATH: My name is Gary Plath. I should probably just shout, I'm used to running meetings and stuff, so talking loud is no big deal. Gary Plath, G-A-R-Y, P-L-A-T-H. I live on the old Paulson farm west of town. We kind of joke about that, everybody knows the old Paulson farm.

UNIDENTIFIED: I can't hear you.

MR. GARY PLATH: They can't hear me back there, okay. We'll try it.

I grew up within just a few miles of downtown Minneapolis, lived there all my life, I was a manufacturer's rep for ten, 12 years and traveled three states. When I decided I wanted to retire I started looking around and spent a year and a half looking. This is where I ended up.

Why did I end up out here? People. I've got phenomenal neighbors. We have a nice town here. It actually is growing a little bit, I guess, from the census, it grew about 60 in the last ten years. I chose to retire here. You got great fishing, you got wonderful people. You're close enough to the -- I call Alex the big city now, but you're close enough to that for everything. It's just a wonderful place to live.

I got to say the one thing. I've been here four years, the one thing that irritated me, and it's a slight irritation, you know, I don't have the facts and the figures on all the stuff that, you know, negativities, you know, the things you guys brought to the table, I'm from the gut. When the met tower got put up it's like I walk out of my bedroom, I see the red light. I don't like that.

Without being too crude, if you're in my bathroom and look out the back door if you don't have the door shut, at night you see the red light from the met tower. I didn't move up here for that stuff. Now I'm going to have all sorts of stuff in my view.

And getting back to somebody talking about house prices, I mean, what would my ten acres with a 140-year-old farmhouse with a decrepit barn be worth without the views that I have? It's just -- it's a great place to live. I can't, you know, I keep a lawn chair facing to the north and there's the met tower. Pretty soon there is going to be -- there's going to be around five of those lights I can see directly to the north. And I thought, well, I'll move my sitting spot over to the other side of the house. And it's like, well, to do that I'm going to have to cut down a whole bunch of trees on the shoreline. Well, then it's like where are the wood ducks going to go, where are the woodpeckers going to go? I got woodpeckers all year round, I got wood ducks. So I've got to cut all those trees so I can sit and look at the stars and the northern lights. And it just -- it's not what I moved up here for, you know.

And I'd agree with, you know, whoever

said the value of your houses, I mean, you're going to build a house on the west side of town over here? You know, it's just -- I don't know. That's where I'm coming from, strictly from the gut. I don't have any facts and figures to put up, alls I know is that when I look out three sides of my house you see water and woods, lakes all over, it's just wonderful.

Like I say, you know, I can pick anywhere to live. You know, I don't have family up here, my closest relative is in Maple Grove, you know. But it's great up here. And I do have neighbors that aren't here because they feel that it's urinating in the wind to even come to a meeting like this because they feel that it's a done deal when it gets to this point. And that's more of a reflection on the state.

I've seen it happen. And I worked in the Cities, I saw Carlson Travel, those people, I saw what they did in Plymouth. Everybody was opposed to the Carlson Business Centers there. Everybody. One by one the leaders started dropping out. Well, why did they drop out? Well, Carlson bought their houses. So now you got all the business stuff in there. I saw that happen, I know people that lived

there. And it's like they went to all of the meetings.

And I wasn't going to come either because I don't need to have my blood pressure up. And I do, I kind of feel like, you know, and I told one of my neighbors, it was that windy day last week, we were having coffee at my house, we might as well step out the door and let's pee to the north because that's where the wind is coming from about 40 miles an hour. And I hope that's not the case. The facts you guys brought to the table, there's a lot of stuff like that. You know, this electricity stuff, most people don't know about it, they haven't researched it.

You know, you look at, on a related note, people in the Cities that wouldn't live near the small transformers of power lines because of suspected birth defect stuff. I know a couple guys like that. And when my kid moved I told him, I says, is there a transformer in the neighborhood, you know, because he's got two small kids. You know, that's stuff where there's not enough research out there.

And I hope we're not urinating in the wind here and I hope everybody gets up here and

1 expresses an opinion. I'm not that eloquent a
2 talker, I don't think, but you guys come on up,
3 voice your opinion.
4 And while we're asking questions, how do
5 you stop a project like this? Will you answer that?
6 Thank you.
7 MR. BIRKHOLZ: Well, it would be wrong on
8 so many levels for me to try to advise you on that,
9 but I will say that in the state of Minnesota there
10 is a statutory preference and requirement towards
11 incorporating wind energy into the overall
12 electrical system, so that's where the impetus for
13 wind development in the state comes from.
14 So my job, as well as the people that
15 make the final decisions in the Public Utilities
16 Commission, are here to make sure that it gets done
17 in the most efficient, respectful and as safe as
18 possible manner that it can be done. What we review
19 here is the economics, the environmental impact, and
20 we try to understand what all the variables are, and
21 that's what we're doing here today.
22 DR. CONNIE TARASEK: My name is
23 Dr. Connie Tarasek, C-O-N-N-I-E, T-A R-A-S-E-K. I'm
24 the veterinarian in town. I've been here 25 years.
25 Anybody who thinks the town's growing is looking the

wrong way. When I came to town there was three grocery stores, a big zero now. Sidewalks used to be shoveled, ain't happening, got to walk in the street from the vet clinic to the post office because people don't shovel the sidewalks. School population, down. This is going to help the school by generation of property taxes, it's going to help the township by generation of property taxes.

I've been to Trimont, Minnesota where there's a huge wind farm, farmers are growing soybeans 15 feet away from the towers. I've been in North Dakota to Tonka Wind Farm that spans the North-South Dakota border, one of the biggest ones out there and the cattle are grazing 15 feet from the towers. There's one in North Dakota. Schools out there are staying open that would close because of wind farms. Kulm, North Dakota, that's K-U-L-M, that's a Tonka wind farm, graduates eight kids a year. Who can run a school with a class of eight without some significant property tax money? And you all know we have a school finance problem here.

The town will boom for the 18 months or two years that it takes to build this project. The towns out there boomed, they couldn't house people, they couldn't feed them, they couldn't entertain

them, they couldn't keep up with the demand.

I think this is a good project. No one has given any scientific data that supports these adverse effects of seizures and heart palpitations, this is all anecdotal information. I heard this crap years ago when the high line was going to go through west central Minnesota, there was going to be all these problems, and that never happened. We're building a big power line along the interstate now, if anybody's been to the Cities, right through major population areas. I think this is a win/win for Parkers.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thank you. And, again, tonight is not necessarily going to get us to the bottom of the answers or what all the answers are, but it's good to bring up all the issues, so that if they weren't in my points to be reviewed and revisited, you can make sure that they are.

And for people -- I'm here, I'm accepting more comment, and I'm letting you know that if you feel more comfortable putting things in writing, by all means, feel free to do that. But we're all neighbors and -- well, not me. We're all neighbors and in this coming together I think it's good that people should go out and share their ideas with each

other.

MR. RODNEY PETERSON: I just have a question about the group there. Who is going to buy this power?

MR. BIRKHOLZ: The question is from Mr. Peterson?

MR. RODNEY PETERSON: Yes.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: The question is who is going to buy the power and, actually, I think Mr. Carlson can address that, or at least the question of how that gets determined.

MR. TERRY CARLSON: Well, who would buy our power. 100 megawatts is a lot of electricity, that's for sure. So we have addressed that over the last six months, working with NSP, who owns Xcel Energy. The document that we forwarded to them was about 400 pages. They, in turn, I believe, went elsewhere after an existing wind farm.

After that, there is only a few other utilities out here. Another would be Minnesota Power. We've also sent them a document such as that. And there's only a couple more utilities out here.

But I believe these RFPs, or request for proposals, are far and few, and we are still

currently addressing the sale of our electricity. But we still have a site permit and a certificate of need to address. So it would be a major utility or a group of utilities, yes.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thank you.

And the issue is, the way the state process works, you know, we have the certificate of need, we have the site permit. If the site permit is issued, there's a clause in the site permit that's in every site permit, and in the process there's a preconstruction meeting before, when all the environmental studies are done, if everything comes to fruition and everything is on the table, there is a provision in the permit that says before construction would begin there would be a power purchase agreement in place or some other enforcement mechanism. So it's not a project that would go up if it didn't have economic viability. The state wants to make sure that those kind of economic possibilities don't occur. But that's a good question.

MR. GALE IVERSON: Gale Iverson, G-A-L-E, I-V-E-R-S-O-N.

I have a question about, like, say, right-of-way. The power line goes down a township

road and supposedly the landowner owns to the center of the road. So if it's not eminent domain and if you haven't signed the power contract, I have a question then, how does that -- how is that determined? That he has the right, say, to go with Prairie Wind down with the power line?

UNIDENTIFIED: We can't hear him.

MR. GALE IVERSON: It would be the right-of-way with the power line, say, down a township road. How does that right-of-way work if there's not an eminent domain and both parties on both sides of the road have not signed the contract? And I guess there's a number of legal issues of, well, liabilities, too. When you put a power line down there and you have other obstructions and crossing the roads and how is this liability covered for everyone involved, including the public?

Thank you.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: And there is issues I think in every case today, but I think typically, unless it's been -- I'd say typically, in the concept as far as wind developers, there hasn't been a case of eminent domain granted by the Public Utilities or by the state. So, in other words, then the developer is responsible, that he needs to get

easements from landowners in order to have wind rights to build a wind farm, in order to get easements to put up transmission lines. So the onus is on the developer to get those easements.

I want you to keep in mind, of course, that tonight is not your only chance. You can contact me at any time with these comments or, actually, if you have questions. Mr. Eknes is in the process, you can contact him at any time about what the process is. But as we go forward your ideas are going to help us understand what the real true impact of this particular project in this particular place, Parkers Prairie, Minnesota in Otter Tail County. What's the real impact, what are the real concerns, what are some of the things that will be problematic, what are some of the things that we can do to mitigate the problems, what are some of the positives of this against another project. So those are the things we'll be looking at over the next six months or so.

So is there anybody else yet that wants to jump in?

MR. BOB PREUSS: My name is Bob Preuss, P-R-E-U-S-S. I'm new to the area here and I live out on County Road 6 in the outlying area of the

project. And I guess I'm conflicted by what you've been talking about tonight here. The statement in the letter that I received says, and I quote, under Minnesota law -- and by the way, I'm impartial about this right now, because I'm not sure whether it's a benefit, an asset, or not. I don't see the economic boom that I'm hearing about coming to this city. I don't understand that. And I don't understand how this is going to improve my taxes. I will find that out, though.

Now, with regard to this statement here, it says under Minnesota law the CN, which is what we're doing, proceeding, is the only, only time which a no-build alternative can be considered. That means tonight, if it doesn't get killed, it's going through.

Thank you. That's right, wrong, or indifferent.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Okay. That's an interesting point. It's good to read -- the CN process is where that is determined, the size, type, and timing, how big a project, where it's going to be, that kind of thing. The siting process is a different thing about mitigations, finding the right locations, making sure we avoid as many

environmental impacts as possible and, again, trying to mitigate for those.

The decision whether or not it's going to get built is underway now. You're absolutely right. And that's a process that, again, about six months down the road will be determined by the Public Utilities Commission and they will make that decision based on agency comments, the environmental report, and much of which has been fed into from your own contributions and your own information. So this is the process.

MR. BOB PREUSS: If I could?

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Sure.

MR. BOB PREUSS: Today I spent some time on the telephone and I found out a couple of interesting things. Number one, I checked with four counties that have wind farms in the state of Minnesota. There is a process going on right now where most of the people that you can talk to are in favor of it because of the financial reward that the farmer receives for having a tower on his property. That's from four to ten thousand dollars per year per tower. That does not include the easement that they receive.

But there's a county called Goodhue,

south of the Minneapolis area, that is currently in conflict right now. And the county board has instituted an ordinance to prevent wind farms from going up in their community. And there's a lot of weird iffy things going on there, and I don't know all the details, but I do know that right now it's in the next step of the process and it's in front of a magistrate judge.

So their concerns are a lot of what I'm hearing here tonight and I don't know what the result is going to be. But I think it's something that those who are opposed to it might want to keep their eye on, because I'm told that if the judge sides with the county that it will kill wind farms in the state of Minnesota because of the setback requirements that they're trying to get implemented. So --

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thank you. That's a very complicated case that's been through the routing process and, you're right, is under review. Again, the issue, as you know, is a question of how the PUC takes into consideration the separate statute -- or not separate statute, separate ordinances of a county and then specific conditions. So I wouldn't want to argue the fine points that they're outlawing

wind farms, but they have an opinion on what a legitimate setback would be to meet their requirements.

MR. BOB PREUSS: That came from wind power people, they said if they get approved or if the judge sides with the county, that it practically will kill the projects because they can't meet the setbacks.

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Right. And we will certainly -- we've certainly had all those arguments before the judge and that will certainly be debated in that case. So I wouldn't be the one to try to judge whether or not that's the case. It's an interesting case and it's ongoing right now, yes.

MS. CLAUDIA LILJEGREN: Claudia Liljegren again.

Are the 250 feet setback from the residence or the property? And when you talk about 250 feet, I'm guessing that that would be from around here to Sammy's?

MR. BIRKHOLZ: Thanks. That's a good question. The 250 feet that the Minnesota -- conditions in Minnesota site permits today have been from roads. The way the permit conditions have been written to date, there was a minimum, as Ms. Sanvik

talked about, of 500 feet away from residences. Not from property lines, but from residences. Or the distance required to meet the Minnesota statutory noise guidelines. So we're finding that typically the modeling on modern wind turbines, I don't think there have been any permits issued and, of course, we would have to go back to the record rather than my memory, but for anything less than 1,000 feet minimum required setback from residences in the recent past.

Well, the discussion will go on. I don't want to hold you all night and force you to participate in it this evening, but we definitely want to encourage all of you to participate and to help you understand what you need to know about this and to help us understand what we need to look at that we may not be looking at. This is the process, this is, as the gentleman pointed out, this is the process where those issues are determined and reviewed, so.

Okay. I'm really glad to see everybody that turned out, this is a way we can get everybody into the discussion. And I appreciate the turnout and I appreciate your participation. It's very useful, very helpful.

I'm sure the company and I will be around for a little while to answer any questions. They have a map out there outside.

So, thank you for coming this evening.

(Meeting concluded.)