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Many people say farmers and ranchers make a lot of money. Some probably do but I would argue that many struggle financially. One of the biggest financial struggles they face is property taxes.

With the latest property tax increase for Summit School my parents are paying over 30% of the income from their land on just the property taxes. Can you tell me any other business that pays 30% of their income on property taxes?

I'm not here to complain about property taxes but I think it is important for people to know the amount of taxes agricultural landowners like my parents pay is substantially more than a non-landowner with the same income. Most of those taxes go to our schools so there is no doubt that agricultural land owners are beneficial to the success of our children.

The unproportionate amount of property taxes that agricultural landowners pay is just one of the many financial issues farmers and ranchers face today. I'm not asking you to change your stance on wind power. I'm asking you to be considerate to the landowner that is struggling and wants to try and supplement some of their income by having wind power on their property.

As we've seen tonight, there are some who are not in favor of wind development and adamantly reject new energy development for a variety of reasons. Some of these opponents are from WE CARE South Dakota. We Care stands for: Wind Energy Concerns About Rural Environment. As their name suggests, if this group was concerned about wind energy development, it would seem they'd be willing to have productive discussions with wind developers about issues, in the least, publish accurate and clear information about wind developments in South Dakota. This does not seem to be the case... They published this ad for a community meeting to inform citizens about "the March 21 meeting in Waverly, *Minnesota* about *Next Era's* project Dakota Range Wind."

The ad also says that the leases could be potentially sold to pipeline companies; in reality Xcel Energy is purchasing Dakota Range Wind and it will provide clean energy to Xcel customers for decades. Apex staff reached out to We Care multiple times to discuss the project and to clarify confusion about Dakota Range Wind and other projects under development in the area. We Care did not return voicemails or emails to arrange a meeting or even a phone call.

If a group with the phrase "wind energy concerns" in their name will not even take a meeting with developers to obtain accurate information about the project, why would they be trusted by any educated citizens to provide information or help the community?

Landowners, community members and economic development organizations within Dakota Range Wind support the project. Apex has been transparent about their process and has gained the trust of community members. The landowners who have signed up deserve clear information and an honest company to work with, we're lucky to have found that with Apex.