



Gary Hanson, Chairman  
Chris Nelson, Vice Chairman  
Kristie Fiegen, Commissioner

*South Dakota*

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

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February 25, 2020

Patricia Van Gerpen  
Executive Director  
SD Public Utilities Commission  
500 E. Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

**RE: EL19-027, In the Matter of the Application by Crowned Ridge Wind II, LLC for a Permit of a Wind Energy Facility in Deuel, Grant, and Codington Counties**

Ms. Van Gerpen,

On February 4, 2020, through February 6, 2020, the Commission held an evidentiary hearing regarding whether a wind energy facility permit should be granted in the above referenced matter. During the hearing, Chairman Hanson questioned Commission Staff witness Hilary Morey whether the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (South Dakota GF&P) has the authority to require Crowned Ridge Wind II, LLC, to allow site access to Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC, to implement the post-construction grouse lek monitoring plan as ordered in Docket EL19-003. On February 7, 2020, Ms. Morey filed a letter in Docket EL19-027 stating that the South Dakota GF&P does not have the authority to require site access, and site access would need to be a condition of a potential permit issued by the Commission.

To address the concerns regarding grouse lek monitoring site access and subsequent ownership changes, Crowned Ridge Wind II, LLC and Commission Staff have agreed to the following condition for Commission consideration:

Applicant shall allow Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC, access to the Project Area to conduct a pre- and post-construction study to evaluate the potential effect of the Crowned Ridge Wind II Project on the local prairie grouse populations. Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC plans to conduct studies in the Crowned Ridge Wind II Project Area in accordance with the plan submitted on December 18, 2019, in Docket EL19-003.

Enclosed is a letter from Northern States Power Company regarding its commitment to cooperate with Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC, to conduct grouse lek monitoring in the Crowned Ridge Wind II Project Area.

Sincerely,

Kristen N. Edwards  
Staff Attorney

013813

February 25, 2020

Ms. Patricia Van Gerpen, Executive Director  
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission  
Capital Building, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
500 East Capital Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501-5070

RE: Docket No. EL19-003 and Docket No. EL19-027

Dear Ms. Van Gerpen,

This letter is to express Northern State Power Company's (NSP's) commitment to cooperate with NEER to provide site access so that they can implement their Grouse Mitigation Plan as ordered in the Site Permit for Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC.

As a part of their site permit, Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC (CRW), an indirect, wholly owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC (NEER), is required to implement a post-construction grouse lek monitoring plan. To address this requirement CRW has proposed to conduct a multi-year study of greater prairie-chicken and sharp-tail grouse lek monitoring. Some of the planned study areas will involve the Crowned Ridge Wind II, LLC wind facility.

Crowned Ridge Wind II, LLC, a wholly owned, indirect subsidiary of NEER, is concurrently developing a second wind farm referred to as the Crowned Ridge II Wind Energy Facility (CR2) immediately to the south of the CRW project boundary. CR2 submitted an application to the Commission on July 9, 2019 for an up to 300.6-megawatt (MW) wind energy facility to be located in Codington, Deuel, and Grant Counties, South Dakota. CR2 has entered into a purchase and sale agreement under which it will permit and construct this Project, and, thereafter, transfer the Project, along with its Facility Permits, to NSP at the commercial operations date.

Since NSP will own and operate CR2 once the site is constructed, we wanted to assure the Public Utilities Commission that we will work cooperatively with CRW and their contractors to ensure they have the needed access to safely conduct their study in the CR2 area provided we receive reasonable advance notice and they agree to follow Xcel Energy safety requirements. We recognize the potential scientific value that the study may provide both the Commission and the wind industry.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 612-330-6278 or via email at [patrick.flowers@xcelenergy.com](mailto:patrick.flowers@xcelenergy.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Flowers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Patrick Flowers  
Manager, Environmental Services  
Xcel Energy, Inc.  
414 Nicollet Mall (414-02)  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Cc: Robert Sandling  
Nathan Svoboda  
ES Records Center