

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION
OF SCS CARBON TRANSPORT LLC FOR
A PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT A CARBON
DIOXIDE PIPELINE.

HP24-001

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

LOREN LOCKEN, BROWN COUNTY, SD

ON BEHALF OF

SUMMIT CARBON SOLUTIONS, LLC

EXHIBIT #

January 31, 2025

1 **Q. Please state your name and business address for the record.**

2 A. My name is Loren Locken. My address is 1306 N. 5th St., Groton, South Dakota 57445.

3 **Q. What is your occupation?**

4 A. I am a Brown County landowner, retired teacher and farmer.

5 **Q. Please briefly describe your operation.**

6 A. I am a fourth generation farmer and have been farming for about 40 years.

7 **Q. Please describe your affiliation with Summit and POET?**

8 A. The project is set to cross my property. I am a retired farmer and am dependent on a
9 strong corn market. I have a history of pipelines and ethanol plants. When POET was envisioned,
10 it needed a six-inch-high pressure natural gas pipeline in order to build a functioning ethanol
11 plant. Northwestern Energy went to the Brown County commissioners and got the approval to
12 place about sixteen miles of pipeline in the township right-of-way. Late one fall after the crop
13 was harvested the pipeline was installed. No communication was done with the landowners nor
14 was any compensation paid to affected landowners to the best of my recollection. I was happy to
15 let them cross my property in exchange for another market for our corn. The Summit six-inch
16 pipeline is designed to carry the carbon dioxide away from the plant and not release it into the
17 local atmosphere appears to be a good plan. The Summit representatives have been very
18 professional and have gone the extra mile to communicate with the landowners along the route.

19 **Q. What is the basis for your testimony?**

20 A. The whole corn industry is dependent on ethanol in the state of South Dakota. I just can't
21 understand anyone turning their back on ethanol. I do not think ethanol is sustainable for the
22 long run without making some changes, and sustainable aviation fuel may be the key to keep
23 ethanol viable for the years to come.

1 **Q. Why is the Summit project necessary for you/your neighbors/South**
2 **Dakota/Ethanol?**

3 A. Most, if not all, of my corn goes to ethanol production. In South Dakota, in general, I
4 have always said that the cattle industry is so big that it affects everyone, no matter what
5 occupation. I believe we are in a situation right now where the corn ethanol industry has taken
6 over that spot. As an example, I went through an implement dealer lot in Aberdeen with my
7 brother this past summer, and I counted 58 modern combines sitting outside that dealership.
8 Then I walked through the buildings, and there were 10 more inside. There were 68 new and
9 slightly used combines. That's a huge financial impact in the state. Plus, you have all of the
10 support equipment involved, such as corn heads, grain carts, and other equipment at that
11 dealership. It is truly a huge industry for South Dakota. A lot of jobs are connected to the corn
12 industry.

13 **Q. What does Summit mean to you in terms of opportunities to grow your operation?**

14 A. Summit is providing an opportunity for the ethanol industry to advance and keep
15 innovating with carbon capture. This would, in turn, help sustain and even grow the corn
16 industry from where it is today.

17 **Q. What context is missing from the concerns stated by others?**

18 A. I think that opponents to the project are missing out on the potential economic benefits of
19 the project and also missing the key facts of the project. They are hearing speculation about
20 what has happened in the past and basing their views on that instead of the facts presented at the
21 informational meetings.

22 The anti-ethanol people and groups around the country from oil companies to tree-
23 huggers along with many others are funding and looking for reasons to curtail, weaken, or

1 abolish ethanol. The oil companies have a financial stake in keeping a full share of the aviation
2 fuel market and would not like to share that market with ethanol. (Remember all the stories
3 pushed by oil companies of ethanol ruining gaskets and engines). Farmers, Counties, Schools,
4 State of SD as well as any other entity that relies on property taxes must be proactive in
5 supporting our corn and ethanol industry. We should not be influenced by groups that are not
6 looking out for our state's best interest.

7 **Q. What fears do you have if the project is not completed?**

8 A. If the Summit project does not happen, and ethanol goes away, we may have to go to
9 other crops less economically feasible than corn. As stated before, this would then affect the
10 entire state economy because of how big the corn industry is in South Dakota. South Dakota land
11 will always be here but the price of corn and our land price can drastically change. We need to do
12 everything we can to protect the price of our corn to provide for our state and communities who
13 depend on the value of our corn to provide jobs and tax revenue.

14 **Q. Has your county acted against the project?**

15 A. Brown County has a 1,500-foot setback for building sites unless the
16 landowner/homeowner signs off on it and agrees to an arrangement, or waiver, with them.

17 **Q. How do you feel about that? How do you feel about other counties which have tried
18 to stop the project?**

19 A. I feel that 1,500 feet is more than enough. As we get closer to Aberdeen, there are more
20 homes that are affected, and it makes it really difficult to meander around the houses. I think
21 Summit has worked very hard to avoid land of owners who object to the Project and sometimes
22 at great expense to Summit.

23 **Q. Do you have safety concerns about the Summit project?**

1 A. No. I feel confident that, with today's technology, safety will be a high priority.

2 **Q. Is your ground part of the Summit project?**

3 A. Yes, however my support of the pipeline is not dependent on whether or not the pipeline
4 crosses my property.

5 **Q. How was your easement experience? Were you fairly treated and compensated?**

6 A. Summit has been solid to visit with. We have never gotten into the negotiation of prices.

7 **Q. In your lifetime, have you had experience with anything else as significant to
8 agriculture as the Summit Pipeline is to ethanol?**

9 A. Two other projects in my lifetime come to mind, one of which was in the 1980s when
10 railroad tracks were being taken out and returned to crop land. The spurs were disappearing and
11 the railroad was wanting to take the main line out of SD that travels east and west through
12 Aberdeen. The topic of removing the main line through Aberdeen was taken up by the state
13 legislature, corn and soybeans were not a big crop in our area. Most of the corn grown was fed to
14 livestock and beans were few. Most of the land was planted to wheat, sunflowers and barley,
15 their yields were low and was trucked to market east of Aberdeen. The railroad thought there was
16 not enough freight on the main line. The railroad wanted big concessions that would cost the
17 state money. The bill was hotly debated for an extended time but a consensus was reached and it
18 passed. I'm betting you would have a hard time finding someone now who would admit to being
19 against the main line at that time. Can you imagine how hard it would be to build a main line
20 now?

21 The other projects that deal with agriculture are the gas pipelines that travel through
22 Brown county. The biggest is the Northern Border pipeline which runs from the AB Canada to
23 Chicago. The Northern Border runs under some of my land and is 42 inches in diameter, the gas

1 is under pressure and is highly flammable. It was often stated that the tax revenue from the
2 Northern Border kept the Conde school open for years, not sure if that was true. There is also the
3 first Keystone pipeline east of Groton a few miles. Its diameter is 30 inches and it carries
4 flammable hydrocarbons from AB, Canada. I don't remember much controversy on the Northern
5 Border but the Keystone had some.

6 My great grandfather and his brother homesteaded on the west side of the James River in
7 circa 1879. The first winter they skied to Watertown twice to get provisions because Aberdeen
8 didn't exist. Fast forward 8 years, look at the map and read what my great grandfather and his
9 fellow homesteaders accomplished. It must have been exciting times in early Brown County. I
10 have a hard time imagining 207 miles of rail lines crisscrossing the land and the infrastructure
11 that goes with it, all built in 7 or 8 years. Agriculture going from no wheat to 5.7 million bushels
12 in 8 years, plus all the crops to feed horses and livestock. Imagine this happening with multiple
13 languages, cultures and cash in the counties checking account at the end of the 8 years. My
14 grandmother was born in a sod house in 1890 and was one of 12 children. These people were
15 concerned with not only their family but their community. I have attached to my testimony a
16 photo of a key on an enlarged Brown County atlas from 1888 that was posted on the wall of a
17 restored train depot at Storybook Land in Aberdeen, South Dakota which shows statistics relating
18 to Brown County and Aberdeen.

19 In conclusion, I would like to say that projects needing multiple people or entities to be in
20 agreement for completion should not be easy to complete, but it should not be impossible either.
21 The 207 miles of rail lines that were built in Brown County in the span of eight years during the
22 1880's, the thousands of miles of local power lines, transmission lines, gas and water pipelines
23 and highways through South Dakota all needed cooperation among people. All of these projects

1 are important for South Dakota's economy. I was traveling southeast of Watertown on interstate
2 29 where the highway angles and cuts sections of land in half from corner to corner for miles.
3 What if South Dakota let a handful of people prevent the completion of interstate 29 and instead
4 moved it forty to fifty miles east? Our state would have been different if interstate 29 would have
5 been in Western Minnesota. Again, complicated projects should be difficult but not impossible.

6 **Q. Does your ground currently have other easements?**

7 A. Yes. Rural water systems, natural gas pipelines, electrical lines, high line poles, power
8 line to Ellendale, and a gasoline pipeline to a tank farm north of Aberdeen all cross my farm
9 land.

10 **Q. What has been your overall experience with easements, both Summit and others?**

11 A. Overall, my experience with easements has been great. I look forward to finalizing any
12 easements with Summit.

13 **Q. Does this conclude your testimony?**

14 A. Yes.

15

16 Dated this 31st day of January, 2025.

17

18 /s/ Loren Locken

19 Loren Locken