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PUBLIC INPUT HEARING

SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Application by Buffalo Ridge II LLC, a  
subsidiary of Iberdrola Renewables, Inc., for an Energy  
Conversion Facility Permit for the Construction of the  
Buffalo Ridge II Wind Farm and Associated Collection  
Substation and Electric Interconnection System

DOCKET EL08-031

Tuesday, January 5, 2009  
6:00 p.m.  
Brookings, South Dakota

1           COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: All right. Ladies and  
2 gentlemen, we're going to go ahead and get started.  
3 There's still a few people signing in, but we'll go  
4 ahead and try to get started close to on time.

5           This -- it's approximately 6:00 on today, January  
6 5. We're here in Brookings. This is the appointed --  
7 the notice of time and location for this evening's  
8 public hearing.

9           I'm Commissioner Dusty Johnson. With me this  
10 evening are Commissioners Steve Kolbeck and Gary  
11 Hanson. And also at the front table is our general  
12 counsel, John Smith; and our commission adviser, Greg  
13 Rislov. We've also got a number of other staffers  
14 from the Public Utilities Commission here that we'll  
15 take a minute to introduce in the event that you have  
16 questions after the hearing. We're got attorney Kara  
17 Semmler back at the table, we've got Stacy  
18 Splittstoesser back there, Brian Rounds up here, Tim  
19 Binder over in that corner.

20           Often at these public hearings, we have the  
21 public outnumbered, but that's not the case tonight.  
22 Some of you probably came because you heard the rumor  
23 Commissioner Kolbeck was singing tonight. That's not  
24 the case. My apologies. But I do think we've a got a  
25 great presentation. We're going to make some legal

1           comments to start this off so people know exactly what  
2           we're doing here today.

3           This is a public input hearing. And this deals  
4           with the Buffalo Ridge II LLC group and application  
5           they've made. And that's a subsidiary of Iberdrola  
6           Renewables. And their application is for a wind  
7           energy facility. And a lot of you know that's for the  
8           construction of a wind farm and associated collection  
9           substation and electrical interconnection system. The  
10          applicant proposes to construct and operate a wind  
11          farm on up to 77 acres dispersed throughout portions  
12          of up to 77 sections of land in Brookings and Deuel  
13          County, as well as a 13-mile long, 115-kilovolt  
14          overhead transmission line. The proposed wind farm  
15          could have a nameplate capacity of up to 306  
16          megawatts.

17          Now the purpose of this hearing is really  
18          twofold. The first is for the applicant to provide  
19          information to you all on what this project is  
20          proposed to look like. The second and more important  
21          opportunity I think is for you all to tell us at the  
22          commission what you think about this project. And as  
23          a result, we would encourage you all to feel free to  
24          make comments.

25          Now for some reason tonight you're not

1 comfortable making public comment, that's fine. We'd  
2 be happy to receive written comment at the Public  
3 Utilities Commission. And, you know, we will take  
4 those comments right up until the point where we make  
5 a decision. The sooner is probably the better in that  
6 if we get them earlier, they may be able to be more of  
7 a part of our deliberation process. But certainly,  
8 there will be an opportunity for you to ask questions  
9 and make statements tonight.

10 Now you can also access the information, the  
11 nonconfidential information, on this project at our  
12 Public Utilities Commission website. And there's a  
13 lot of information on there, and so rather than walk  
14 you through all the links, I would just say you can  
15 call us or you can talk with any of the staffers here  
16 tonight or any of the commissioners and we'll try to  
17 walk you through how you can get access to that  
18 information online.

19 Now currently the parties to this proceeding --  
20 there is two of them, and that's the applicant and the  
21 Public Utilities Commission. Under South Dakota law,  
22 each municipality, county, and governmental agency in  
23 the area where the facility is proposed to be  
24 constructed or any person or entity -- and that means  
25 you all -- may be granted party status in the

1 proceeding by making a written application to the  
2 commission on or before January 16, 2009. We do have  
3 the applications here. I believe Ms. Semmler has some  
4 applications for party status. Now you don't need to  
5 have party status to make your views known. Gaining  
6 party status does provide you some additional  
7 opportunities, as well as some legal obligations that  
8 I think most of you probably wouldn't need to  
9 participate at the level you want to participate in.  
10 But if you might want to at a hearing call witnesses,  
11 cross-examine witnesses, introduce your own evidence,  
12 certainly you would have that opportunity if granted  
13 party status by the commission.

14 Now there are really four things that the  
15 applicant has to do in order to have its permit  
16 approved. The first is that the proposed energy  
17 conversion facility must comply with all applicable  
18 laws and rules; second, the energy conversion facility  
19 must not pose a threat of serious injury to the  
20 environment or to the social and economic condition of  
21 inhabitants or expected inhabitants at the siting  
22 area; third, the energy conversion facility must not  
23 substantially impair the health, safety, or welfare of  
24 the inhabitants; and finally, four, the energy  
25 conversion facility must not unduly interfere with the

1           orderly development of the region.

2           Now based on these factors, once we hear all of  
3           the evidence -- and, really, the applicant has the  
4           burden of proof to prove all of those things -- once  
5           we hear all of the evidence, then the commission  
6           really has three options: We can deny the  
7           application, we can approve the application, or we can  
8           approve the application with a number of conditions  
9           and stipulations based on how we think that facility  
10          should be constructed and/or operated.

11          Now we're going to begin the hearing tonight by  
12          having the applicant make a presentation as we  
13          explained. And following that, we were going to have  
14          a mic, and we'll just ask you to come up and maybe  
15          right in the middle here, just stand. We'll have a  
16          microphone, a walking-around microphone. And  
17          Ms. Splittstoesser has the microphone. And so after  
18          we hear from the applicant, we'll take either comments  
19          or questions.

20          We're going to kick it off at this time to  
21          Mr. Brett Koenecke for Buffalo Ridge. And,  
22          Mr. Koenecke, take it away. And I should -- one final  
23          thing and remind you one more time. Ms. Risty is  
24          serving as our court reporter this evening. And we  
25          would just ask that you speak slowly, clearly, and

1           loudly anytime you'd like to make yourself heard.

2           Mr. Koenecke, proceed.

3           MR. KOENECKE: Thank you, Mr. Johnson, and the  
4           commissioners and commission staff. I appreciate  
5           being here in Brookings tonight. It's always good to  
6           be back in the shadow of the campanile.

7           My name is Brett Koenecke. I'm a lawyer from  
8           Pierre, and I routinely represent clients before the  
9           Public Utilities Commission. And that's what I'm  
10          doing here tonight: I'm representing Iberdrola  
11          Renewables with respect to its application to the  
12          Public Utilities Commission to construct the proposed  
13          Buffalo Ridge II Wind Farm here in Brookings and then  
14          up north in Deuel County.

15          The Buffalo Ridge II is a large wind project, and  
16          because of its size, it does require a siting permit,  
17          which is different from the other wind farms which  
18          have already been constructed in Brookings County.  
19          This will be 306 megawatts. And as Commissioner  
20          Johnson explained, this meeting is convened to hear  
21          from the public about the project and not really so  
22          much from my client Iberdrola. However, we do think  
23          and recognize that there might be some of you in the  
24          crowd who have not heard much about this project or  
25          perhaps are here for more information, and so we've

1 got a short presentation to put on for you so that you  
2 can learn more about the project.

3 With that said, it's very important to my client,  
4 the assembled people up here, and the other people in  
5 front of me to hear your viewpoint and your concerns  
6 about the project. That's why we're here. And we  
7 will be very glad to do that once our short  
8 presentation is over. So we very much look forward to  
9 having that discussion with you here tonight. We want  
10 to hear what you have to say about the project, and I  
11 thank you in advance for coming and for your interest.

12 With that said, I'll turn the microphone over to  
13 Mr. Tim Seck. He's the director of the project for  
14 Iberdrola Renewables. He lives in the Twin Cities and  
15 is here tonight to explain a little bit about  
16 Iberdrola and a little bit about the project. And  
17 then we'll pass the microphone to Paul Skurdahl, an  
18 engineer from Portland, who will have some discussion  
19 about the engineering and construction; and then to  
20 Dave Sweet who is the local manager for Iberdrola and  
21 lives right here in this area and we'll talk about  
22 operations and maintenance with him. Thank you very  
23 much.

24 COMMISSION JOHNSON: Mr. Seck, before you get  
25 started, let's do a volume check. If you can't hear,



1       raise your hand and we'll -- right there. Okay. A  
2       few more.

3               Mr. Seck, let's start by -- try to speak close  
4       with the mic, and then we'll adjust volume on our end  
5       a little bit. If you still can't hear, just please  
6       raise your hand and somebody will come over and we'll  
7       figure out what we can do to help. Go ahead, Mr.  
8       Seck.

9               MR. SECK: Thanks, Commissioner Johnson. My name  
10      is Tim Seck, and I'm pleased to be here in the  
11      Brookings and Deuel County area. We're a proud member  
12      of this community. We've recently built two wind  
13      projects in Brookings County, and we look forward to  
14      being here tonight and talking to you about an  
15      expansion that we're proposing.

16              Before I talk about the project, I want to talk a  
17      little bit about -- give you a quick overview on the  
18      company and then talk about the proposed project and  
19      where we're at in the development process and where we  
20      need to go.

21              So with that, Iberdrola Renewables is the largest  
22      owner/operator of wind power projects in the world.  
23      We have over 8,000 megawatts of wind around the  
24      country -- around the world. In South Dakota we  
25      have -- in 2007, we completed 54 megawatts of wind

1 development. And then just at the end of December of  
2 this last year in 2008, we completed another  
3 50-megawatt project called Buffalo Ridge I.

4 We've got projects across the country. We've got  
5 a number of projects clustered in the Pacific  
6 Northwest and we have a number in California and we  
7 have a number of projects in kind of the four-state  
8 region in the Midwest: In Iowa, Minnesota,  
9 South Dakota, and we're building a project right now  
10 in North Dakota. And we've got a couple of other  
11 projects that aren't even on this map that recently  
12 were completed. And we've got a number of projects in  
13 the northeast. So we've got projects from coast to  
14 coast but a big concentration in this area because of  
15 the wind resource.

16 And the project that's being proposed as  
17 Commissioner Johnson said is a 306-megawatt project.  
18 We're looking at turbines ranging in size from 1.5  
19 megawatts to 2.4 megawatts. The hub height of the  
20 towers will be anywhere from 80 to a hundred meters,  
21 which is roughly 262 to 328 feet. And the rotor  
22 diameter of these turbines is anywhere from 77 meters  
23 to 95 meters or 256 feet to 312 feet. So they're  
24 large turbines similar to the ones that we recently  
25 completed in the Buffalo Ridge I project and the

1 MinnDakota project.

2 The project will also consist of 16-foot gravel  
3 roads, low profile, where we run from the county or  
4 township road to the wind turbine. We'll have  
5 underground collection systems running 34.5, and then  
6 we'll have overhead transmission ranging in size from  
7 34.5 kilovolts to 115 kilovolts. That's about  
8 13 miles. And then the project will -- all the power  
9 from the project will be collected and delivered back  
10 to the Brookings County substation, which is owned by  
11 Xcel Energy. The project will also consist -- so  
12 we'll have one project substation immediately adjacent  
13 to the Brookings County substation of our own, and  
14 then we'll have another project substation a little  
15 further north, and I'll show you that in a minute.

16 The project will also consist of a couple of  
17 permanent meteorological towers that are unguyed,  
18 they're freestanding, and then what we call a SODAR; a  
19 piece of equipment that also measures wind speed, but  
20 it's not like a tower. It's more of a compressed --  
21 it's about the size of, like, a compressor, a small  
22 compressor.

23 The target and service date of the project is in  
24 the 2010 to 2011 time frame. And the projects give  
25 you a sense of how much power will be produced at the

1 project. It will produce enough energy to meet the  
2 annual energy needs of about a hundred thousand homes.  
3 So it's a significant project in terms of how much  
4 energy we will provide to this region in the state.

5 The project boundary is indicated on this map and  
6 it's on the handout. Roughly, the heart of the  
7 project is boundaried between Toronto, Astoria, and  
8 White. So that's kind of where we're focusing the  
9 project. As indicated, it's spread out over about 77  
10 sections, but we'll only use -- the footprint -- the  
11 actual footprint of the project will only be about 77  
12 acres, so less than 1 percent.

13 There's a couple of maps right over here to the  
14 left and in our application. The maps show a  
15 preliminary layout for a two-megawatt turbine.  
16 There's about 166 dots on the map that represent  
17 proposed turbine locations, and the overhead  
18 collection line as indicated, along with the proposed  
19 roads and underground, proposed O&M building, and the  
20 permanent met. tower. And all the facilities are  
21 outlined in that map.

22 There are a number of key steps as you move to  
23 develop a project, and the first and foremost starts  
24 with, you know, what land is available. And so in  
25 order for us to build a project, we need a partnership

1 with landowners. So we've gone out and entered into  
2 contracts with landowners who want to participate in  
3 the project. It's a voluntary contract. And, you  
4 know, all the facilities that we're proposing are on  
5 land that's -- where we have a lease with the  
6 landowner. So we've got a relationship and a  
7 partnership with the landowners that want to  
8 participate in the project.

9 We've got -- the other -- another key component  
10 is wind data. We put up a number of meteorological  
11 towers around the site to collect data on what wind  
12 resource we have in the area, and that's absolutely  
13 critical to a successful project. If you want to get  
14 financing is you have to have a long-term record of  
15 wind at the site.

16 Another key component to a successful project is  
17 an interconnection agreement. And these are --  
18 interconnection agreement. And so we had -- we filed  
19 applications with the Midwest Independent System  
20 Operator, who is kind of like the traffic cop of who  
21 can plug into the grid in this particular region. And  
22 we've been in the -- we applied four years ago for our  
23 first application for 210 megawatts, and we recently  
24 entered into an interconnection agreement with MISO  
25 for 210 megawatts. So it takes a while to get through

1       that process. We recently got through it for the  
2       first part of this project, for the 210 megawatts; and  
3       I expect in the first quarter of 2009 we'll enter into  
4       the interconnection agreement with MISO for other  
5       remaining 96 megawatts.

6               Once we start moving forward with the project, we  
7       need to develop what we call a constraint map, and the  
8       constraint map looks at what land is available to us  
9       under lease and what are the setbacks that are  
10      required in order for us to develop the project. So  
11      we looked at the setbacks in Brookings County and  
12      Deuel County and used those setbacks to develop our  
13      layout. The setbacks include a greater of 50 dBA or a  
14      thousand feet from homes and businesses. It requires  
15      setbacks from roads and property lines where we don't  
16      have a lease on the other side of the greater of  
17      500 feet or 1.1 times the total height of the turbine  
18      to the tip of the blade. So we've got those kind of  
19      setbacks in a map. And then we give that to our  
20      meteorology group, and they develop a layout based on  
21      where they can put the turbines based on those  
22      constraints.

23              Then we develop a layout, a preliminary layout.  
24      And the layout that you saw -- you see over here and I  
25      showed you previously -- that's a preliminary layout

1       for a two-megawatt turbine. And we went out -- after  
2       we generated that layout, then we went out and staked  
3       it all. In everybody's field, there's little wood  
4       stakes with a pink ribbon. Then after it's staked, we  
5       go out and we review it. We all -- it's a bunch of us  
6       piled in the car; it's the environmental folks, it's  
7       the construction engineers, the developer, it's the  
8       meteorologist. We're all looking at, you know, how --  
9       you know, are there some shifts that we need to make  
10      based on what we're seeing out in the field? And  
11      there always are. So we make some changes to the  
12      layout.

13           Then we go out and do a number of surveys. We do  
14      surveys for cultural resources, surveys for wetlands,  
15      surveys for habitat, surveys for avian or bird use.  
16      And when we get the results of all those studies, then  
17      we make additional changes to the layout. So we  
18      completed those studies at the end of the year, we're  
19      writing up the studies. And we've submitted the avian  
20      report to the commission, and we'll be submitting the  
21      other reports shortly.

22           Then we have a series of meetings with the  
23      landowners to receive input on where we're proposing  
24      to put the facilities. And we've had I think at least  
25      three meetings with the landowners to seek input and

1 provide them with updates on the project. And so we  
2 made additional changes to the layout based on those  
3 meetings.

4 And right now we're here to talk about this next  
5 phase of the project, and that's the permitting phase.  
6 So we made an application to the Public Utilities  
7 Commission for a site permit, and we've also made a  
8 permit application to the Brookings County for a  
9 conditional use permit. And that hearing's tomorrow  
10 night. So we're in the permitting phase, and that may  
11 come up with some changes that require us to tweak our  
12 layout. So it's kind of an intermittent process in  
13 terms of the layout.

14 The next phase is for the company to decide that  
15 they're going to allocate turbines to the project. If  
16 the project is going to get built in 2010, they'll  
17 make that decision in the first half of 2009. And  
18 then they'll say, okay, you know, Buffalo Ridge II is  
19 going to get 306 megawatts of turbine X. And if it's  
20 a turbine that's -- you know, it's a 2.4-megawatt  
21 turbine, then we'll have less turbines than what's  
22 shown on the map, and it will have different spacing  
23 because they're going to have larger rotors and need  
24 to be spaced out more. If it's a smaller turbine,  
25 then we'll have the turbines probably closer together



1       because your rotor diameters will be smaller and that  
2       allows you to put them closer together.

3               So once we finalize the turbine, then we go out  
4       and do the geotech work to determine if the site is  
5       suitable for the turbine foundation at each location,  
6       and that typically requires us to make some changes  
7       based on soil conditions.

8               The final two components that need to occur  
9       before we build the project is either -- is to sell  
10      the power either to a utility, a regional utility,  
11      under a long-term power purchase agreement, or the  
12      company if feels comfortable that we can sell the  
13      power into the market and be able to make our internal  
14      rate of return at the market price, then we might move  
15      forward under what's called a merchant approach. And  
16      we certainly got experience doing that in the region  
17      and nationally, and we're comfortable with that. So  
18      that may be an option for us here.

19              And finally, the last step in the project is the  
20      financing. And our company, typically a balance sheet  
21      to finance the project through construction, which  
22      means we don't need to go out and secure funding once  
23      we're comfortable moving forward with the project.

24              So those are kind of the key steps in the  
25      development. And we're kind of at the permitting

1 stage, but we've got a few more steps left to go  
2 before we get to the finish line.

3 So with that, I'll -- wraps up kind of the  
4 development portion of the presentation. I'm going to  
5 turn it over to Paul Skurdahl. Paul is our director  
6 of construction engineering. He's got a lot of  
7 experience. And he's been involved in over a thousand  
8 megawatts of wind and actually was the construction  
9 manager for about 270 megawatts of it. So Paul has a  
10 lot of experience, and he's going to talk about the  
11 construction phase of the project.

12 MR. SKURDAHL: As Tim said, the last and final  
13 step of this process is the construction; although  
14 after we construct it, then we own it and operate it.  
15 He also mentioned we own and operate about  
16 8,000 megawatts of projects around the world, and so  
17 we know what we like in the way the wind projects  
18 work. So when we hire someone to build a project, we  
19 know what we want at the end of the day. And so we  
20 put our own people on-site to match that construction  
21 process, and that's the way that we end up with a  
22 product that we like. And also, you as local people  
23 to the project -- either landowners that are involved  
24 with the project or nearby -- can take comfort in  
25 knowing that we're going to end up with a project that

1 we can all live with in the long-term.

2 So during the construction of the project, which  
3 will take somewhere between six and nine months  
4 depending on certain conditions of the weather and  
5 other things, we'll have up to 130 construction  
6 workers during that time frame. And we will be  
7 building the project to meet all the local  
8 requirements, state and federal, including storm water  
9 so that you can be comfortable that there won't be any  
10 problems with any of your fields or those kinds of  
11 issues. We're very, very tight with our own  
12 contractors about making sure that those things work.

13 As Tim said, the target and service date for this  
14 project is in 2010 or '11. We could potentially split  
15 the construction cycle over two years, and again, that  
16 depends a bit on the delivery of turbines and when  
17 those become available. What would be typical if we  
18 split this project over two years is we would build  
19 the roads and foundations in one year, install some of  
20 the turbines, and then come back in the next year and  
21 finish the delivery of the turbines. And then there  
22 is quite a bit of logistics in moving 160 to 200  
23 machines. Each turbine is somewhere between eight and  
24 ten semis' worth of equipment, and plus all the other  
25 construction equipment going along.

1           Now this is a typical road. In the foreground,  
2       we've stripped the topsoil and have begun to lay down  
3       a fabric. And then behind that fabric, you can see  
4       the crushed rock, which is the permanent road  
5       location. If you see also, it's generally level with  
6       the existing grade. That's the way we build our  
7       permanent construction roads so that the landowners  
8       can easily continue their farming, they can drive  
9       across the road to do their farming and not have that  
10      be an impediment. And those roads are also available  
11      to the landowners for their own access to the fields.

12           The picture on the left you can see essentially  
13      the same kind of a picture. The road has been  
14      constructed, and then the area to the left and right  
15      of each of those roads is basically reclaimed land.  
16      We build to that width to allow our cranes to walk  
17      between the turbines, to construct the turbine. And  
18      then at the completion of the construction, then we  
19      grade that smooth and the farmer can then go back and  
20      grow his crops right up to the edge of the field. If  
21      you look at this picture on the right, you can see  
22      that the corn is planted right up to the edge of the  
23      road, and that's perfectly fine with us.

24           On the left is -- well, actually, both of these  
25      are foundations in construction. The turbine base

1       there, the foundation is about 50 feet across. And  
2       from the center of the picture where you can see the  
3       steel sticking up, that's where we grade. That's the  
4       existing grade of the project of the land. And it's  
5       about eight feet from there down to the base where the  
6       hole has been dug out. That's all backfilled and the  
7       ground brought back to level. The picture on the  
8       right is the pouring of the concrete.

9               So this is the completed foundation. As you can  
10       see, the grade has been brought back to the edge of  
11       the pedestal. The steel bolts sticking up are where  
12       we bolt the found -- not the foundation but the tower  
13       components to it. And here's the erection of the  
14       tower components. Depending on the type of the  
15       turbine, there's three or four pieces. These sections  
16       are lifted into place on that turbine base and then  
17       bolted together.

18              The final picture here of the turbine and  
19       erection, three or four tower pieces and the cell at  
20       the top, and then the rotor being flown up. That  
21       crane is about 365 feet tall and, depending on the  
22       type of turbine, can lift up to 300 tons.

23              The collector system here is as shown. What's  
24       typical is that we have a trenching machine that comes  
25       through and cuts a trench, lays the cable, and then we

1       come back right behind it and fill -- backfill the  
2       trench. This is then brought together in a collector  
3       system. And for the specific Buffalo Ridge II  
4       project, we have a north substation where we step the  
5       voltage up to 115 kV and then bring that power down to  
6       the Brookings substation. In the southern end of the  
7       project, this collector system here is brought down to  
8       what we're calling the Buffalo Ridge II south  
9       substation, and then it is adjacent to the Brookings  
10      County substation.

11           So those power lines, the overhead, this is a  
12      115-kV pole. It's about 50 feet tall. It would carry  
13      the power from the north substation. And then closer  
14      to the south end of the project, we would have all of  
15      the project on one right-of-way so that all 300  
16      megawatts -- 306 megawatts of the project are brought  
17      down to -- adjacent to the Brookings substation.

18           Now I'd like to introduce Dave Sweet. He's  
19      director of operations located here in the adjacent  
20      area of Brookings managing both the MinnDakota and  
21      Buffalo Ridge I project.

22           MR. SWEET: My job is going to be basically to  
23      run the operations and maintenance of the site once  
24      it's built and turned over to me. Currently, what  
25      we're planning is 15 to 20 people that would be hired

1       in our local community. We will at that point train  
2       the individuals, knowing that a lot of young farmers,  
3       things of that nature, trying to get into the business  
4       have really no experience in the wind industry.

5               Once we get them hired, like I said, we'll get  
6       them trained up with the specific turbine types,  
7       things of that nature, and will be performing all of  
8       the scheduled and unscheduled maintenance routine  
9       there at the site.

10              What I mean by scheduled is every six months we  
11       go through and we do the normal operations,  
12       maintenance for the towers, which is basically  
13       checking the lubes, the oils, greases, things of that  
14       nature, looking for loose wires, making sure that the  
15       turbines are ready and operational for whenever the  
16       wind is blowing.

17              Unscheduled maintenance is basically anytime that  
18       a turbine is not available to operate during that  
19       windy period; whether it's a breakdown, whether it's  
20       unscheduled, retrofits by the manufacturer, things of  
21       that nature that we need to take a look at during that  
22       time frame. We will also be responsible for all  
23       balance of the plant, which means snow removal from  
24       the local turbine roads, it means taking care of the  
25       electrical systems both underground and overhead,

1 things of that nature.

2 And it has been mentioned, you know, I will be  
3 the primary contact and the face between Iberdrola  
4 Renewables and the landowners. So if there's any  
5 questions or concerns, things of that nature, I'm at  
6 the plant at all times, you know, Monday through  
7 Friday, or can be reached by cell phone to address any  
8 of the issues at that point.

9 This is a typical O&M facility that we are  
10 currently running out of the MinnDakota site down here  
11 in Brookings County over near Elkton. And we  
12 currently run 124 towers out of that facility there.

13 I'll turn it back over to you.

14 MR. KOENECKE: Commissioners, that concludes our  
15 presentation. We'd be glad to give it back to you for  
16 the rest of the night.

17 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Great. Thanks very much.  
18 One reminder: If you haven't signed in at the back of  
19 the room, we really ask you to. That is our only  
20 record of the attendance of this evening's meeting.  
21 We'd like it for the official record. So if you would  
22 please make sure to sign in if you haven't yet. We  
23 really appreciate that.

24 What would be typical at this point is for the  
25 commissioners to ask a few questions. Because of the



1 large attendance tonight, we're actually going to  
2 forego our questions. We'll have lots of  
3 opportunities as a part of this process to ask  
4 questions. So at this point, we'll open it up to you.

5 We're going to scratch what I suggested earlier.  
6 Rather than using this center aisle as sort of a Q  
7 area, we're going to have you go ahead and raise your  
8 hand if you want to speak. I mean it can be a little  
9 bit intimidating to stand in front of everybody, so  
10 we'll let you make comments from your spot. Raise  
11 your hand. We'll hustle a mic over there. We're  
12 going to ask you before you start speaking -- or the  
13 first thing to do when you start speaking is to say  
14 your name and, again, speak clearly and loudly so that  
15 Ms. Risty can hear. And let us know if you've a  
16 question or a comment so we can get you taken care of  
17 appropriately.

18 All right. Let's open it up. Who's got a  
19 question or a comment? I know there's other stuff  
20 going on in Brookings tonight. This isn't the only  
21 game in town so... Any comments about the facility?

22 COMMISSIONER HANSON: Everyone here is opposed to  
23 it I assume?

24 MR. SPENCE: I'm Terrell Spence. I live on the  
25 -- my family and I live on the west -- Terrell,

1 T-E-R-R-E-L-L, Spence, S-P-E-N-C-E. My family and I  
2 have a small acreage, so we're not farmers out in the  
3 region. And we're on the -- I guess the northwest  
4 sector in our little township.

5 And my wife and I have discussed this. We  
6 haven't had much information prior to since we're not  
7 involved as a landowner, only a neighbor. We moved  
8 out to South Dakota about 19 years ago from New Jersey  
9 of all places; although we're native Southerners. But  
10 we always wanted to get back to the land. That's  
11 where we -- did up with our acreage. And in that  
12 time, we've had a few things change as likely is to  
13 happen: Some power lines that were involved; one of  
14 the larger dairies moved into the region; and now we  
15 have the wind power, which we're actually in support  
16 of. It's one of those things where it's for the  
17 greater good, but at the same time, you have your  
18 not-in-my-backyard kind of reaction as well because of  
19 our lifestyle. We're not raising cattle or anything  
20 like that. We moved out there for, if you will, the  
21 aesthetics and the quiet and so forth. Well, I'll  
22 just -- I'll not go any further with that, but it  
23 doesn't affect our lifestyles individually, just as  
24 this whole project would affect so many other people's  
25 lives with provision of the power that's involved.

1           I guess what I'm getting at is I have  
2 researched a little bit regarding land values.  
3 And there's not a lot of that out there  
4 reflecting what might happen as far as the  
5 impact with our acreage. I'm estimating we are  
6 going to be within 800 feet I suppose of those  
7 towers on our south and slightly more of those  
8 on our north.

9           At any rate, is there any recourse or anything  
10 that would lighten the burden from our point of view  
11 if somebody would like to buy our acreage, for  
12 example? But we won't know the effect until they're  
13 up. You know, we realize that. But does anybody have  
14 any information regarding the devaluing of adjacent  
15 properties that are not involved with the actual  
16 process? That's all.

17           COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Good question. Thanks.

18           MR. SECK: I see you looking over this way so I  
19 think you're asking us to take a stab at that. There  
20 have been some studies on property values adjacent to  
21 wind projects in a couple of states including  
22 Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa and Illinois. And that  
23 study indicated that property values did not go down  
24 for adjacent landowners or for landowners that are a  
25 part of the project. So -- and I think we talk about

1       that study in our report so -- but you're right; there  
2       haven't been a number of studies on that. But  
3       that's -- you know, there have been studies that we're  
4       aware of to show that there hasn't been a devaluation  
5       from being adjacent to wind turbines.

6               COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And, Mr. Seck, if he  
7       provided you with contact information, would somebody  
8       at Iberdrola be willing to point him toward a  
9       hyperlink or some other location where a study might  
10      be?

11             MR. SECK: Yeah, I'd be happy to.

12             COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. If you could come  
13      up and talk to Mr. Seck afterwards, we'll see if he  
14      can get you that information.

15             Other questions or comments?

16             MR. LEIFERMAN: John Leiferman. I live on  
17      Buffalo Ridge II they just completed up here north of  
18      Elkton. And about seven years ago, I was fortunate  
19      enough to make phone calls to different companies, and  
20      I was one of the first people to contact Iberdrola.  
21      And they came over to South Dakota. And so we were  
22      the first to sign up in the state here. And I want to  
23      say that these are the most professional people I've  
24      ever worked with in my life. And the construction of  
25      Buffalo Ridge II, there was some -- you know, I talked

1 with some people in Minnesota that there was some  
2 damage of township roads and there was a lot of  
3 complaints about not being reimbursed. But my wife's  
4 on our township ward, and with the last completion  
5 there, they reimbursed us for some construction. So I  
6 was very pleased. They took care of all the gravel  
7 roads in our township, which was a big concern because  
8 a lot of townships do not have a big budget to begin  
9 with. And we checked out Elkton there. They had  
10 opted out because of taxes, they didn't have enough  
11 taxes. And we find out there's going to be  
12 approximately \$80,000 from MinnDakota that will be  
13 going to the school district, Elkton School District,  
14 this next year in May. That's a huge boost to a small  
15 community like that. And I have no -- I support it a  
16 hundred percent because it's good for the -- we have a  
17 lot of pastures in our land and we have beautiful new  
18 roads through there.

19 And another thing is when they were  
20 building the towers, there was some -- we had  
21 some concerns about where the roads would go.  
22 And Tim sat down with us and my brother and  
23 there was -- and we worked out -- we asked what  
24 the best place was for the road. And they  
25 worked with us in every situation we had a

1 complaint. They sat down with us and worked it  
2 out. So I encourage anybody who's interested  
3 in being a part of this project. I support it  
4 a hundred percent because they're very  
5 professional with their work. Oh,  
6 L-E-I-F-E-R-M-A-N.

7 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thanks very much. Other  
8 comments or questions?

9 MR. FALKEN: Dennis Falken, Brookings County  
10 commissioner. And I just want to go on record here  
11 just to let you know that we support wind energy in  
12 Brookings County, the commission does. We've, again,  
13 had two of these before us before. And our zoning  
14 office has gone to a lot of effort to make sure we  
15 protect the property owners and the setbacks, and  
16 that's exactly what was talked about here. And we'll  
17 have a hearing tomorrow night at our planning and  
18 zoning meeting and hear all the information that --  
19 some more of the information in depth that you heard  
20 tonight. But I just want to go on record that our  
21 county commission does support the wind energy in  
22 Brookings County. F-A-L-K-E-N.

23 MR. BIRD: Bill Bird. I'm a trustee for the town  
24 of Toronto. I'm down here to find out how Toronto  
25 will benefit from this project. What kind of money

1           can the town expect? The town is always short of  
2           money, you know.

3           MR. SECK: Thank you for that question. I don't  
4           have at the tip of my tongue an estimate of how  
5           Toronto specifically will benefit. But certainly  
6           during construction, it will have as we indicated a  
7           number of people in the community and whenever I'm in  
8           the community meeting in Toronto. This will be during  
9           construction -- you'll have kind of increased goods  
10          and services, you'll have more workers in the area  
11          buying goods and services and homes.

12          But long-term the real benefit is in two things.  
13          There will be increased payments of the payments to  
14          landowners in the area, which will infuse a  
15          significant amount of additional revenue into the  
16          community, which I think will circulate around through  
17          the community, No. 1. But more directly there will  
18          be -- we'll be paying substantial taxes on the wind  
19          project that will benefit the school districts as was  
20          indicated earlier, townships, and county.

21          So, you know, that will benefit everybody at  
22          large that lives in these communities. So, you know,  
23          I think there will be substantial kind of direct  
24          benefits and a number of indirect benefits from these  
25          projects.

1           MR. BIRD: Question No. 2, what do you expect  
2 from the volunteer fire department?

3           MR. SECK: I'm going to turn that over to Dave  
4 Sweet.

5           MR. SWEET: Our expectations for the fire  
6 department are basically to help participate. We do  
7 have an EHS procedure that is in place. We have all  
8 of our technicians that are trained in tower rescue,  
9 things of that nature. We do have some EMTs currently  
10 on staff. And anybody that is a volunteer that would  
11 like to, you know, hire in, that is, you know, fully  
12 acceptable also. At which point what we would like to  
13 do is integrate with the volunteers and invite them  
14 out, let them see what the wind turbines are about,  
15 see basically what would be involved in a tower  
16 rescue. Nine times out of ten in my 12 years of  
17 experience, we would have -- even in our exercises, we  
18 have somebody on the ground before the volunteers  
19 would actually get there, and that's just due to  
20 location, things of that nature, and how prepared we  
21 are. So basically, I would ask the volunteers --  
22 excuse me, volunteer firefighters to be involved to  
23 come out when we do invite you, to see the towers, you  
24 know, that kind of stuff, and just be prepared.

25           MR. BIRD: All right. Another question. What



1 happens if you call the fire department and a tower is  
2 destroyed, what liability are they? Is there any  
3 liability involved?

4 MR. SWEET: Your liability -- and, Tim, correct  
5 me if I'm mistaken -- but your liability would be the  
6 same as if you went to a residential location and  
7 fought a fire there. You're basically -- all you're  
8 going to be requested to do is maintain the local area  
9 where the fire would be. And other than that, there  
10 is no liability that I see for the fire department.

11 MR. BIRD: Thank you for your information.  
12 B-I-R-D.

13 MS. ROELOFSEN: My name is Jan Roelofsen,  
14 R-O-E-L-O-F-S-E-N. We're excited to have Iberdrola in  
15 our area with the Buffalo II project. We feel that  
16 it's going to be a big economic impact for our area.  
17 I know that there's young people already talking about  
18 the possibility of jobs with the wind tower project  
19 either, you know, building or later on with, you know,  
20 what needs to be done. And I have served on the  
21 school board, and I know that the money that will come  
22 in as tax money will be a great benefit to the  
23 Deubrook School District. Also, it will be a benefit  
24 to the farmers and the people that are going to have  
25 the wind towers. And we need that economic

1 development here in our county. So we would really  
2 appreciate your support of this project. Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Other questions or  
4 comments?

5 MS. LEIFERMAN: My name is Sharon Leiferman,  
6 L-E-I-F-E-R-M-A-N. I live in eastern South Dakota  
7 right between the MinnDakota I project and the  
8 MinnDakota -- or the Buffalo Ridge I project, and we  
9 are also involved in the Buffalo II project.

10 Several of the comments I was going to make have  
11 already been made by other people, but the things I  
12 wanted to touch on were: One of the biggest things  
13 about wind is that it's such a clean power. I've  
14 often said that I would rather have a wind project in  
15 my backyard -- and I will. These are in my  
16 backyard -- but I would rather have a wind project in  
17 my backyard than a coal plant within 40 miles or a  
18 nuclear reactor within a hundred.

19 We look at the state of the energy in our  
20 country, and we realize that the electrical demand is  
21 rising and that our existing technologies of hydro  
22 cannot keep up. We went through enough years of  
23 drought here in South Dakota; we've seen what  
24 happened. You know, we are fighting over to keep the  
25 water in the dam or let the water go according to

1       whether you're on the fishing side or the recreation  
2       side or the power side. So hydro is not all that  
3       dependable.

4               I don't wish to ever see another Chernobyl.  
5       That's why I don't want nuclear around. Coal does not  
6       result in zero emissions as far as I've ever heard.  
7       They've cleaned up their act, but they are not clean.

8               So wind is a big thing in our community. It's a  
9       big asset. We know that there has to be wind -- or  
10      there has to be an electrical generation boost in this  
11      country, and it's going to have to be somewhere. And  
12      I, like Mr. Spence, would maybe just as soon not see  
13      it right in our backyard, but I'd rather have it there  
14      than a number of other things.

15              The country has to do something to raise their  
16      energy production, and this is one of the best I've  
17      seen. So I just want to lay that thought out.

18              Another thing is that, as a landowner, this  
19      provides an income stream that's not affected by any  
20      agricultural commodity market. This is not tied to  
21      anything that we know. Okay. It's not tied to land  
22      values, either existing or future -- they can go up  
23      and down -- but this stream is guaranteed. So these  
24      are things to think about.

25              And something that was already touched on was the

1       dollars coming into communities get re-spent and  
2       re-spent. The studies I've seen are anywhere from  
3       four to ten times that dollar changes hands. So  
4       that's a big boost first to the landowners, then to  
5       everybody downstream from them. So things to think  
6       about.

7               We've already touched on taxes that will help  
8       support the local schools who are being starved at the  
9       state level. And if the Public Utilities Commission  
10      has any influence with that, we would greatly  
11      appreciate putting a bug in the ear of the revenue  
12      department that you can't keep syphoning money out of  
13      these areas and not sending it back. You know, this  
14      power is being generated in this area. Why can't our  
15      schools retain more of it? Because otherwise, the  
16      burden does come back on the landowners, you know. We  
17      can't close the schools. We need to keep them open.

18             One comment I'd like to make is -- it wasn't  
19      addressed by Iberdrola -- was that the setback  
20      requirements are a minimum of a thousand feet or more,  
21      so it will be a little further than -- pardon me?  
22      Well, right. I mean so the sound would make it even  
23      further. So -- you know, so you get a little more  
24      safety cushion there.

25             My husband has already talked about another of

1 the benefits that we will see is that a lot of these  
2 turbines are in our pastures, and we're going to get  
3 some wonderful roads out of that, which is greatly  
4 going to decrease the wear and tear on our trucks and  
5 trailers when we're moving in and out of those  
6 pastures. So there's a lot of benefits to this that  
7 maybe haven't been touched on tonight, and I just  
8 wanted to mention them.

9 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thanks. Other questions  
10 or comments?

11 MR. KNUTSON: I'm Duane Knutson, a member of the  
12 Brookings County Planning and Zoning Commission. And  
13 I'd just like to say that, you know, they've already  
14 got a project in place, and as far as what Keith  
15 Leiferman said, I'd like to back that up. They are  
16 professional. You know, their homework was done  
17 before they got here. And it's just been -- you know,  
18 I don't work with them like Bob does on a day-to-day  
19 basis, but there just haven't been a lot of issues.  
20 And, you know, it's in their best interest to get any  
21 problems corrected right away, and apparently, it's  
22 happening that way; so I'm all for it.

23 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thanks very much.

24 COMMISSIONER KOLBECK: I just wanted to comment  
25 on your -- about the schooling. Since we've seen

1 development like this in South Dakota, Mitchell Votech  
2 does actually offer a program now for turbine  
3 training. So any of those students that you have  
4 contact with in your school today, be sure to put a  
5 bug in there. I know there's a lot of interest, but  
6 it should hopefully become something else that  
7 South Dakota can depend on.

8 MR. PATRICK: I want to thank the PUC for coming  
9 tonight. It shows your interest. I'm Norris Patrick  
10 from Oak Lake Township. I think I want to keep the  
11 input as far as the local farmers as to where the  
12 turbines go and where the roads go, I want to keep  
13 that in there so we can talk. And Tim told me tonight  
14 that that's available. But I think that's a big part.  
15 So it doesn't get to be such a hassle. It can be  
16 good, it can be bad, and that's the way it's going to  
17 sell for you guys. Thank you. N-O-R-R-I-S.

18 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Other questions or  
19 comments?

20 MR. IVERSON: Walt Iverson. I'm on the north  
21 edge of Brookings County right up where the -- it  
22 looks like the towers for now probably are not going  
23 to be built north of us but right on the -- right  
24 south of the Brookings Deuel County line. A  
25 landowner. And having worked with this company now

1       for -- well, it started out with Robert Peterson --  
2       Robert Erickson that came around, getting us  
3       interested in signing leases. And from that point on,  
4       I'd say that our working with this company has been  
5       very favorable. We've been impressed with their  
6       cooperation and their willingness to listen to those  
7       of us that are landowners and to get our input. And  
8       if that working relationship would continue on into  
9       the future, why, I would have nothing but good to say  
10      about the company. And we're excited for what it  
11      might do for our community. Thank you.

12           MS. CARTER: My name is Catherine Carter,  
13      C-A-R-T-E-R. I have a question about the 50-decibel  
14      level; actually, dBA adjusted. Yeah?

15           COMMISSIONER HANSON: A little closer. Thanks.

16           MS. CARTER: Okay. A question about the  
17      50-decibel adjusted level. I understand that that is  
18      the level that you're using as the criteria for  
19      placement; is that correct? They're using the  
20      50-decibel level as one of their criteria for  
21      placement; is that correct?

22           MR. SECK: That's one of the criteria. It's  
23      actually the greater of --

24           MS. CARTER: A thousand feet or --

25           MR. SECK: -- a thousand feet or 50 dBA. And our

1 modeling shows that we meet the 50 dBA with a setback  
2 of about -- with our noisiest turbine -- at about  
3 625 feet. So we've got a pretty significant, you  
4 know, cushion going to a thousand feet.

5 MS. CARTER: But we don't -- you don't know yet  
6 what turbines you're going to be using, right? And  
7 there's substantial differences in the sound emission  
8 by those different turbines, right? Do you have a  
9 figure in your report?

10 MR. SECK: Yes, we --

11 MS. CARTER: You don't yet know which turbines  
12 you're using, right? Plus I also wanted to ask -- so  
13 I want to know what criteria you use, since you don't  
14 know at this point, to decide which turbines you'll  
15 get. I -- that's partly out of your hands perhaps.  
16 I'm not sure how that works. So I want to know about  
17 how that works, and do we have any input on that since  
18 there is a substantial difference in the sound  
19 emission of those different turbines.

20 And the other thing is: What is the South Dakota  
21 standard? Do we have a standard? I know 50 -- 50 is  
22 about like light traffic at a hundred feet. And it's  
23 the standard often used for dBA for, like,  
24 construction in, like, suburban areas, things like  
25 that. But we're not talking about that kind of area.



1 I know some places -- in Massachusetts, for example --  
2 are looking at lower levels. And, of course, you go  
3 ten decibels -- you know, another ten decibels and  
4 you're effectively doubling perceived sound. Doubling  
5 perceived sound.

6 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: We'll answer your question  
7 first about South Dakota standards and then turn it  
8 over to the applicant for their comments. There's not  
9 a standard in South Dakota state law, but the  
10 commission has used similar standards in recent siting  
11 orders. And, you know, any of the analysts will  
12 correct me if I'm wrong, but I think it hasn't been  
13 unusual for the commission to have -- to use a  
14 50-decibel level. But it's at the nearest property  
15 line, which would be generally, you know, closer than  
16 the actual residence.

17 MS. CARTER: They specify -- they're talking  
18 about to the residents, not to their property line; am  
19 I correct?

20 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: If we could go ahead and  
21 have you say that into the mic one more time so that I  
22 can --

23 MS. CARTER: In their application, I believe they  
24 specify these values are to the residents and not to  
25 the property line.

1           COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: What they -- and I say  
2 this with all due respect to the applicant, but it  
3 doesn't really matter what they propose. I mean it  
4 matters, but ultimately, they don't get to decide what  
5 the order says. And so, you know, quite instructive  
6 might be what the commission has had as a general rule  
7 of thumb in the past. I don't want to rephrase your  
8 question, and so I'll ask the applicant to answer the  
9 question as you put it.

10           I might just add one more, which is: Assuming  
11 your noisiest turbine, do you have -- and we're not --  
12 I mean I don't need the exact number, but give us an  
13 idea of with your nosiest turbine what your estimated  
14 decibel level has been in your studies at 1,000 feet,  
15 if you have that information.

16           MR. SECK: Thank you, Commissioner Johnson. Our  
17 noisiest turbine to meet the 50 dBA is we meet that  
18 standard at 625 feet. I don't have -- do we have for  
19 thousand -- what it is at a thousand feet?

20           UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, we don't have it.

21           MR. SECK: I don't think we have the number at a  
22 thousand feet. But we clearly, even with our nosiest  
23 turbine, we meet the 50-dBA standard at 625 feet. So  
24 our quieter turbine will meet it even closer in than  
25 that standard.

1           And then if I can respond to Ms. Carter's couple  
2           of questions. In terms of like I just said, the  
3           625 feet at 50 dBA, assuming are the noisiest turbine  
4           that we're proposing, but clearly any turbine that we  
5           propose that was different than that, we'd have to  
6           adjust our setbacks based on that turbine if it's  
7           noisy. I don't anticipate that we'll have a turbine  
8           that's noisier than the one that meets that standard  
9           at 625.

10           In terms of what that standard means, in many  
11           other states that have a noise standard, like in the  
12           neighboring state of Minnesota, the 50 dBA is a  
13           nighttime noise standard. So it's meant to be a  
14           quieter standard than what's allowed during the day.  
15           So it's supposed to be a standard that reflects at  
16           night you're expecting a quieter atmosphere.

17           In our application, we talk about: What does 50  
18           dBA sound like? And 50 dBA sounds like kind of when  
19           you're in an office and you've got kind of -- you  
20           know, without talking, you've got kind of the normal  
21           background noise. And that's kind of what a 50-dBA  
22           standard is: Kind of the background noise that you  
23           expect to hear in an office.

24           So that's, you know -- and I think you had a  
25           third question that -- well, those are the two

1 questions that I remember so if there's...

2 MR. LEIFERMAN: John Leiferman again.

3 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Sorry, John. Just to  
4 flush this out a little bit more. I think I remember  
5 that noise dissipates logarithmically; is that  
6 correct?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: That's correct.

8 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: And that's just a fancy  
9 way for saying the further you get away from 625,  
10 sound dissipates rather quickly.

11 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

12 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: So I just wanted to  
13 mention that. Sorry, John. Go ahead.

14 MR. LEIFERMAN: A few months ago, I was talking  
15 with Tim Seck, and he was talking about putting  
16 some -- I'm sorry. A few months ago, I was visiting  
17 with Tim Seck, and he was talking about putting a  
18 presentation in the -- you know, the Public Utilities  
19 commissioners about Buffalo Ridge II, and it was going  
20 to be a \$700 million project. But Tim did not know  
21 what size turbines they were going to get yet because  
22 it was -- a lot of these manufacturers are sold out  
23 years in advance. And he was wondering why the state  
24 was so picky. I mean if they develop the site, they  
25 don't know what size turbines they're going to be, so

1           they might have to move the turbines. And he made it  
2           sound, if I'm correct, that once you put a site down,  
3           you can't move it.

4           Am I correct, Tim? Help me with this. What was  
5           the problem that you saw of presenting this? You  
6           remember you discussed that with me?

7           MR. SECK: John, I think that there have been  
8           some differences in permitting, but in terms of  
9           different states being open to kind of a more fluid  
10          process called permit box. And I think in  
11          South Dakota they're considering a permit box  
12          approach. And so that would -- but it's really up to  
13          the commission to make that final determination.

14          Certainly, that kind of a process makes it a lot  
15          easier to develop a wind project that is constantly  
16          kind of changing based on all the input that's coming  
17          in all the way to construction. So the answer --  
18          that's the answer to that.

19          In terms of I guess going back do that noise  
20          question, my colleague indicated that his estimate of  
21          what that noisiest turbine would be at a thousand feet  
22          would be about 40 dBA.

23          MR. SKURDAHL: We'll have to confirm that.

24          MR. SECK: We'll confirm that. But I can also  
25          tell you that we've had the MinnDakota project up and

1 operational for over a year, and the setback  
2 requirements for the MinnDakota project was 50 dBA or  
3 five hundred feet. We have some turbines that are  
4 well within a thousand feet of homes, and we haven't  
5 had any complaints on noise from those turbines. So  
6 we're not proposing to be any closer than a thousand  
7 feet; but we certainly have turbines closer than that,  
8 and they haven't been issues in the community.

9 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Just for those of you that  
10 don't have the benefit of having the application right  
11 in front of you, on page 74 they do list a sound  
12 chart, and at 40 decibels, which, again, is subject to  
13 check what the applicant has said, it would be at a  
14 thousand feet. Forty decibels is approximately the  
15 background noise in the living room if the television  
16 set is off.

17 Okay. Other comments questions or comments?

18 MS. CARTER: About a third of the houses, about a  
19 third of the residents are estimated to be I think,  
20 what, 45 to 50 -- in that 40, 50 range. And I'd kind  
21 of like to see a contour map as well. Contour map  
22 decibel in relation to the residents. And that's not  
23 part of there. That would be nice.

24 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: What do you mean by 40 or  
25 50, within 40 to 50?

1 MS. CARTER: DBA.

2 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Okay. And we may want to  
3 flush this out a little bit more with you and have  
4 staff and the applicant get together and have some  
5 comments with you. Because I think what the  
6 application says is that the -- they will build --  
7 they'll be the furthest away of one of two criteria:  
8 Either 50 dBA or a thousand feet. And, again, subject  
9 to check, it sounds like at a thousand feet, it would  
10 be 40 decibels rather than 50 so --

11 MS. CARTER: Well, that's going to vary by  
12 terrain and a lot of things.

13 COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: No, that's a great point.  
14 That's absolutely right. These things are very  
15 site-specific. You're absolutely right.

16 Other questions or comments?

17 MR. OLSON: Brad Olson. I'm a landowner over on  
18 the west side of this project. I'd just like to make  
19 one comment I guess. You know, this isn't all great  
20 for the tax base. My wife and I spent our working  
21 career buying and paying for a piece of land over  
22 there. We built our dream home. Now this project has  
23 ended that dream for us. You know, I opted out of it.  
24 I looked at the lease, talked with attorneys. I  
25 didn't believe it was fair to the landowners and

1       decided not to go with it first -- the lease, land  
2       lease. But I just wanted that to go on record. Thank  
3       you.

4               COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: That's an excellent point.  
5       It certainly has an effect on the community.

6               Other comments or questions? Other comments or  
7       questions? We'll give you one more shot, but we'll  
8       just mention two other things while you maybe collect  
9       your thoughts.

10              First off, again, there is the application that's  
11       filed online. And if you want some more information  
12       about how to navigate that, please let us know. We'd  
13       be happy to help you. Also, paper copies of the  
14       application are on file at the Deuel and Brookings  
15       County -- I believe it's the auditor's office. And so  
16       you can check that out if you need to take a look at a  
17       hard copy.

18              Also, you know, certainly on behalf of, you know,  
19       Commissioners Gary Hanson, Steve Kolbeck. I'm  
20       Commissioner Dusty Johnson. And we'll stick around  
21       here afterwards. You know, we prefer to get your  
22       comments in an open session like this or in writing so  
23       that we can think about them and have them on file and  
24       share them with, you know, staff and the applicant.  
25       But if you're not comfortable doing that, we'd be



1 happy to chat with you tonight, too, about general  
2 questions and concerns you might have. And staff  
3 members -- again, Ms. Semmler, Mr. Binder,  
4 Ms. Splittstoesser, Mr. Rounds, Mr. Smith, and  
5 Mr. Rislov -- would also be happy to help walk you  
6 through the process and let you know kind of what  
7 we're doing -- what we intend to do on our end.

8 Other questions or comments? Other questions or  
9 comments?

10 Again, the intervention deadline is January 16,  
11 and if there are no further questions or comments,  
12 we'll bring this public input hearing to a close.  
13 Thank you very much and have a good evening.

14 (Proceedings adjourned at 7:12 p.m.)  
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## C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA                    )  
  : ss  
COUNTY OF MINNEHAHA                    )

I, MAXINE J. RISTY, Court Reporter, do hereby  
certify the foregoing pages 1-49, inclusive, are a true and  
correct transcript of my stenotype notes.

In testimony whereof, I have hereto set my hand  
this \_\_\_\_\_day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2009.

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