

September 13, 2017

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Clark, SD 57225

I am a resident of Clark County. My husband and I have a farm here built on land that my great-grandfather homesteaded over 100 years ago. We are deeply committed to the way of life we've established and are fighting to preserve it for future generations. And we are not alone. I am one voice but represent a large group of fellow residents deeply concerned by the deceptive way that one large corporation inserted itself into our community and attempted to exploit our trust in the name of corporate greed.

Crocker Wind Farm presented its Application for a Conditional Use Permit in February to the Clark County Board of Adjustment. The Board considered all aspects of the application, listened to the local residents, and found that the primary objection was to the close proximity of turbines to occupied homes. The application asked for 1,000-foot setbacks; residents felt strongly that 1-mile setbacks were the minimum acceptable standard. The Board engaged in lengthy careful deliberations and approved the application, with conditions such as a 3/4-mile setback, in a Written Findings document filed in May. These conditions, along with the Conditional Use Permit, include critical requirements which have been completely ignored: Crocker Wind Farm has not been consulting with Township boards, they have not been in contact with our County's Highway Superintendent, they have made no "good faith effort" regarding an Aircraft Detection Lighting System, and they have not been working toward resolution with Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative (ITC) as required by the Board of Adjustment in their ruling.

Crocker Wind Farm's current Facility Permit Application states in Section 2 that it complies with the South Dakota Legislature's Burden of Proof; namely, that it "has given consideration to the views of the governing bodies of the local affected units of government". Yet, despite the Clark County Board of Adjustment Findings stipulating a 3/4-mile setback, this application contains four different maps with 2,000-foot setbacks, placing turbines nearly twice as close to occupied homes as mandated by the Board. This is a direct violation of the local government's decision.

A week ago, Crocker Wind Farm's law firm submitted yet another map and a letter for your consideration. They state that the new map is at 3,920 feet, which is 40 feet shy of the county's vote for 3/4 of a mile. When this many conflicting numbers are put forward, it's unclear what setbacks are requested – the setbacks approved by Clark County, the setbacks contained in Crocker Wind Farm's current application for a facility permit, the setbacks in the latest map, or the random setback of 3,920 feet? Clearly this application was filed prematurely.

The same letter from May, Adam, Gerdes, and Thompson suggests that the PUC grant approval based on a practice known as "permit the box"; namely, "approve now, we'll provide details later". Given the significant economic, social, and health impacts to the nearby landowners, coupled with Crocker Wind Farm's pending court case against our county, providing approval without awareness of specific details seems ill-advised. I understand that this practice has been employed before, however, "we've done it before therefore it's the right decision now" doesn't sound like a terribly strong argument considering the implications.

We are a small community of farmers. We're not wealthy, we can't afford expensive legal representation or lobbyists. But we believe we deserve to be heard. The applicant has attempted to drown out our voices with thousands of pages of documentation and threats to approach the Supreme Court. We understand that we may not win. But we believe that corporations running ramshod over local government should not be tolerated.