

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE MATTER OF THE)
APPLICATION BY CROCKER WIND)
FARM, LLC FOR A PERMIT OF A)
WIND ENERGY FACILITY AND A 345)
KV TRANSMISSION LINE IN CLARK)
COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA, FOR)
CROCKER WIND FARM)

EL 17-028

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF

RODNEY CHRISTMAN

ON BEHALF OF

CROCKER WIND FARM, LLC

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

2 Rodney Allen Christman

3 16049 420 Ave, Clark SD 57225

4

5 **Q. How long have you lived in the area?**

6 37 years

7

8 **Q. How has the area changed since you've lived there?**

9 Our immediate neighborhood has seen much change! Since we have lived here, the
10 Northern Border Pipeline was built through the area including a pumping station about 1
11 ¼ miles east of our house. We have also seen the addition of some new electrical
12 transmission lines including one from the Northern Border pumping location.

13 We have also seen advancement in farming and farming equipment. Along with this
14 advancement, many farmers have either retired, sold their land and moved to town, many
15 of whom have passed away, or have been fortunate to pass their land on to their future
16 generation. We have seen some people move here from other areas/states for pleasure
17 opportunities, rather than making their living from the land.

18

19 **Q. Please describe your operation.**

20 We raise beef cattle and run a cow/calf operation along with small grain farming.

21

22 **Q. Are you a participant in the proposed Crocker Wind project?**

23 Yes

24

25 **Q. What does the Crocker Wind project mean for you and your family?**

26 As a landowner, farmer and rancher, it means I am able to look at the wind farm lease
27 with Geronimo Energy as a cash crop, which is stable. Bankers prefer that! The added
28 crop and land values could keep farms in families for generations.

29

30 **Q. Do you consider your wind opportunity to be commercial agriculture and how do**
31 **you see it working with your overall operation?**

32

33 Yes. It's called a wind farm. It uses the wind and land resource from my farm to make a
34 product for market. I consider it to be commercial agriculture. We are producing a
35 product from the land that is sold into the market like what we do with grain and cattle.
36 Harvesting the wind is just a diversification of my overall commercial agricultural
37 farming operation. Wind power has been a part of farming and used by farmers
38 throughout the world over the centuries for various purposes including pumping water,
39 milling grain and generating electricity.

40 **Q. Can you share your intent of submitted copies of Agricultural Easements signed by**
41 **some residences in the Crocker area?**

42 Yes. The strongest local opponents have moved here in recent years and many of them do
43 not make their living off the land. They have done that elsewhere. Yet, they are trying to
44 dictate how we, as landowners, farm and secure our income sources. I have personally
45 heard comments such as "I just don't want to look at them" and "we want to see the
46 sunrises". I feel our community's and landowners' welfare, income and economic vitality
47 is being sacrificed for the opponents' own personal preferences. Our private property
48 rights are at stake. Back in 2003, the county made a decision to set conditions requiring

49 people interested in building a house in rural areas to sign an easement in order to protect
50 rural landowners from the new homeowner attempting to limit the landowner's ability to
51 use his rural property for income and agricultural purposes. The new home site owners
52 signed agreements that they wouldn't attempt to stop us from using our land for legal
53 purposes and they were made aware that there is dust, noise and other realities in the rural
54 area that isn't always perfect just for their enjoyment. The County should be doing more
55 to enforce these easements to protect rural landowner rights. This is not a residential area.
56 These are working lands! I submitted copies of Agricultural Easements from five of the
57 opponents who signed these easements with full knowledge they were moving to and/or
58 building homes in an agricultural area. This easement is in accordance with the
59 conditions set forth in the decision of Clark County, dated July 1, 2003.

60 The agricultural easements I submitted have been signed by the following individuals that
61 have or are actively opposing the project. They are aggressively attempting to take away
62 our legal right to utilize our land for this commercial agricultural purpose. Clark county
63 has a wind ordinance that lays out the rules in order to build a wind farm and they pushed
64 to try and change those rules and they continue to try and stop the project through the SD
65 PUC process. The project made changes to attempt to address their concerns but it is
66 never good enough. This project area isn't just for their personal enjoyment and they
67 knew that before they built their houses.

68 - Dave and Darci Adam (Residence in NW4 of Section 17-118-58)

69 - Nearest proposed turbine over ¾ mile away

70 - Pamela Bjerke (Residence in NW4 of Section 7-118-57)

71 - Nearest proposed turbine around ½ mile away

- 72 - Jeffrey Kalo (Residence in SE4 of Section 21-118-58)
- 73 - Nearest proposed turbine around ½ mile away
- 74 - Gale Paulson (Residence in W2 of Section 24-118-58)
- 75 - Nearest proposed turbine over ¾ mile away
- 76 - Carol Stevens (Residence in SE4SE4 of Section 7-118-58)
- 77 - Nearest proposed turbine over ½ mile away

78 Others easements have been signed by those who have opposed the project but
79 their residence is not adjacent to the project area.

80 **Q. What does the Crocker Wind project mean for your community?**

81 Clark, being the county seat, in my opinion, should “stand out”! The community benefits
82 from this project cannot be ignored. Income to townships, our county, and state of South
83 Dakota, will provide improvements beyond measure, including a huge tax relief. An
84 added Community Fund, controlled by a local board, will provide a guaranteed income to
85 be used in various ways. Our schools will benefit not only through funding, but by the
86 potential of increased enrollment, as well.

87 We all use electricity. And we like it! I can speak from experience what it's like on the
88 farm not to have it. The ice storm of 2005 gave us 13 days without electricity. How
89 thankful we were to have Rural Water (another sign of progress) to our waterers, as our
90 cattle usually drink from a well, pumped by electricity. Not being able to plug the tractor
91 in to heat the motor to do the feeding, we had to go out and start it every 2 hr around the
92 clock to insure it would start at feeding times.

93

94

95 **Q. How will Crocker Wind impact Clark County, in your view?**

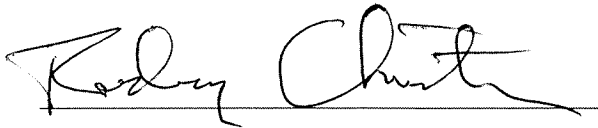
96 Wind is a cost-effective form of energy and it is plentiful here in the Crocker Hills. Wind
97 works very well with natural gas generation. I can envision the possibility of a combined
98 cycle power plant built in the area as well. Northern Border Pipe Line runs through
99 northern Clark County, which is actually located 1 ¼ mile east of my
100 residence. Construction and maintenance needs of the project would bring more people
101 to the area, creating good paying jobs which enables increased spending in local towns
102 and additional businesses on main street!
103 Clark has an Industrial Park which could become home to companies making necessary
104 parts for wind farms locally and elsewhere.

105

106 Dated this 27th day of September, 2017.

107

108



109 Rodney Christman

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