

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

JODY OBERMEIER

ON BEHALF OF

CROCKER WIND FARM, LLC

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

2 A. Jody Obermeier
3 16018 417a Ave
4 Clark, SD 57225

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

6 A. I grew up in the Bradley area which is a neighboring community to the wind farm
7 project. My parents and siblings still all reside in this area. Our family roots and family pride run
8 deep, home is where we want to be and where we want to raise our children. Being able to work
9 off the land and in our home community is something we learned as children and it is very
10 important to us this value is passed on. I currently live on the Obermeier Ranch a 3rd generation
11 ranch in the Crocker Hills. I am married to Ted Obermeier, he and his brother took over the
12 ranch from their father and are the 2nd generation, our children are the 3rd generation. Family ties
13 and roots run deep for them also and keeping the 3rd generation on the ranch is something that is
14 very important to my husband and family.

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

16 A. Our population and school numbers are declining in 1977 my husband graduated with 77
17 in his class in 1991 I graduated with 47 in my class, our youngest of four children is in
18 kindergarten class of 2030 and he has 18 in his class. But the declining number of children in
19 school also means less families in the area, less people to shop local and less people to attend
20 church.

21 On the positive side I see many changes to the north of such as in Day County the large
22 transmission line going through and near Groton, SD I see the upgrading of the substation for the

23 welcoming of renewable energy.

24 **Q. Please describe your operation.**

25 A. We are ranchers we mainly raise cattle but we do also have crops. We have acres of
26 grassland and farmland making a living off this land is our livelihood. In our everyday operations
27 we work together as a family.

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

29 A. Yes I am a participant in the Crocker Wind Farm project along with my family. Taking
30 care of our land is something that is very important to our family. We take pride in our land I
31 would consider us stewards of the land. What happens to our land on a daily basis is very
32 thought out whether it's where to graze our cattle next or what crop rotation we should use. We
33 do what's best for the condition of the land, it's a valuable resource and we do not want to over
34 use it. When our family was approached by Geronimo Energy offering us an opportunity to be
35 part of the Crocker Wind Farm it was not a readily made decision. Our decision was very
36 thought out and researched, it took us years and many hours to work out the fine details. We
37 wanted to do what was best for our land, our family and our community. Geronimo Energy
38 considered our thoughts and requests before any contracts were agreed upon. Geronimo Energy
39 is a very reputable and respectful company in my opinion.

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

41 A. The Crocker Wind Farm to our family means stability, financial security, a way to pay
42 debt, a definite way to diversify our ranch. As our children grow and become adults we hope
43 they can have the same opportunity we have had making a living off the land. But for many this
44 is a complete struggle the financial burdens and volatile markets hold many back from becoming
45 a young farmer and rancher. Many of these children are forced to go elsewhere looking for work

46 because it is not feasible for them to “stay home” or even stay in their home state of South
47 Dakota, this breaks my heart. They leave home in distress and are confused because this is not
48 what their heart desires. A stable income from the wind farm would help our ranch and
49 community grow and create opportunities for our children to “stay home”.

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

51 A. In the building stages the community would see economic benefit from the workers
52 needing a place to stay, a place to eat, buy groceries and fuel. The jobs that will be offered to the
53 local people will economically benefit individuals as well as local companies. The community
54 would benefit from the tax base coming into the schools.

55 The community fund will have a great impact on our local organizations also.

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

57 A. It’s not every day Clark County will be approached with an industry that will bring this
58 kind if economic impact to the county and the state. The economic benefit it will offer our
59 community should not be overlooked. Year after year we pay more and more taxes. These taxes
60 are becoming a financial burden to some. Wouldn’t having another source of income coming
61 into the county and schools help alleviate some of the tax increases?

62

63 Dated this 27 day of September, 2017.

64

65 Jody Obermeier

66 Jody Obermeier

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