

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

WILKES T. OBERMEIER

ON BEHALF OF

CROCKER WIND FARM, LLC

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

2 Wilkes T. Obermeier

3 16005 417A Ave, Clark, SD 57225

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

5 I have lived in this area my entire life. I am a young farmer at 28 years old.

6 **Q. What changes have you noticed in the area over the years.**

7 The major change I have noticed over the years is the major increase in land prices. This
8 is a challenge for young farmers who want to purchase land for a farming operation. It is
9 a challenge for young farmers to get into farming, pay for expenses and pay for the land.
10 In many cases people with outside money are able to come in and purchase the land when
11 there are financial challenges in agriculture.

12 I have noticed that farming operations are getting bigger over time to compete. Most of
13 the successful farmers that I know have looked for opportunities to grow and I view the
14 wind farm as one of these opportunities to maximize the use of my property in order to
15 grow.

16 **Q. Please describe your operation.**

17 I own land in the Crocker area and farm with my dad and uncle. We grain farm and run a
18 cow/calf operation.

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

20 Yes. I own land in the project.

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

22 The project will provide financial stability with income. The revenue from the wind farm
23 will help us invest into our farms, our families and our futures.

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

25 I think one of the biggest benefits to the project is the fact that it will provide some
26 opportunity for other young people to work in the area. We need to bring some
27 opportunity back to the county so people can come back after they go to school. It is very
28 common for people to move away for school and never come back. This project will
29 create economic activity and it would provide jobs in the area. Providing job
30 opportunities for younger people in the area will be good for the community. Some farms
31 can't support their son or daughter coming back to work on the farm as their main source
32 of income. If that person was able to secure a meaningful job in the area, they could help
33 support the farm when it is needed the most.

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

35 A major benefit to the County and local area is going to be the tax revenue from the
36 project. Expenses keep going up over time and so do our land taxes. The increased taxes,
37 higher input costs and volatility in agricultural prices puts a lot of pressure on people
38 trying to farm and pay for land. We need to be looking for ways to increase business in
39 the county so all the taxes don't just keep going to the landowners. This is a case where
40 everyone will benefit from the tax revenue when participating landowners host wind
41 turbine on their property.

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43 Dated this 27th day of September, 2017.

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46 Wilkes T. Obermeier
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