

February 5, 2018

Jody Obermeier

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Clark, SD 57225  
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Dear Madam Chairperson and South Dakota Public Utility Commissioners,

My name is Jody Obermeier, I am a landowner within the Crocker Wind Farm Project. I grew up in the Bradley area which is a neighboring community to the wind farm project. My parents and siblings still all reside in this area. Our family roots and family pride run deep, home is where we want to be and where we want to raise our children. Being able to work off the land and in our home community is something we learned as children and it is very important to us this value is passed on. I currently live on the Obermeier Ranch a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation ranch in the Crocker Hills. I am married to ██████████, keeping the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation on the ranch is something that is very important to my husband and family. We mainly raise cattle but we also have crops too.

Working off the land whether it is our farmland or grassland it is something we do every day and it is our livelihood. Our land owner rights are very sacred to us. We feel the way this wind farm project is being handled by the Clark County Commissioners our rights as landowners are being infringed upon. I feel our neighbors in the opposition are being allowed more rights to our land than we as landowners are. Our rights as landowners is something I never felt we would ever have to be concerned about and we shouldn't have to be. For an example our oldest son starting out as a young farmer and owns a small parcel of land has lost all of his wind towers to the neighbors and the ¾ of a mile set back. The ¾ of a mile set back implemented by our county commissioners has taken away all of his rights as landowner he doesn't get any wind towers and doesn't have any say about it. I feel the neighbor ¾ of a mile away has more say over his land than he does, and they aren't the ones paying the land taxes.

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

As our children grow and become adults we hope they can have the same opportunity we have had making a living off the land. But for many this is a complete struggle the financial burdens and volatile markets hold many back from becoming a young farmer and rancher. Many of these children are forced to go elsewhere looking for work because it is not feasible for them to "stay home" or even stay in their home state of South Dakota, this breaks my heart. They leave home in distress and are confused

because this is not what their heart desires. A stable income from the wind farm would help our ranch and community grow and create opportunities for our children to “stay home”.

The State of South Dakota offers Build Dakota Scholarships for our youth attending South Dakota technical schools, recipients of the scholarships must commit to living and working in the state, in their field of study, for three years following graduation. Let’s create jobs for them. The wind farm qualifies as one of these job opportunities.

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

Our property currently sits between two operating wind farms, the one to the north is in Day County and the one to the south east is in Clark County and is Oak Tree Wind Farm Aka Oak Tree Energy. The Oak Tree Wind Farm is 19.5 MW and they paid over \$100k in taxes (2016 taxes paid in 2017) so the Crocker Wind Farm a proposed 400 MW project is over 20 times larger and could be expected to pay around \$2 Million a year. The actual figures from the State Department of Revenue are as follows; Oak Tree Energy paid \$108,191.51 in nameplate capacity tax and production tax for 2016 payable in 2017. \$68,438.30 total was sent to Clark County divided up as follows \$34,219.15 to the Clark School District, \$23,953.40 to Clark County, \$6,532.75 to Garfield Township, \$3,733.00 to Mount Pleasant Township and \$39,753.21 remained with the State.

We have found that most of the people opposing the wind power project are not trying to make a living off the land or they have moved here from another state or they have lived in the county for less than 10 years. Sixty landowners in northern Clark County have signed up for the wind power project most have lived here all their lives and making a living off the land is their livelihood. Over the years these residents have worked the land, with pride, blood, sweat and tears trying to keep the land in the family name to pass on to the next generations. If you (the opposition) do not understand this way of life you should not be telling these residents what they should be doing with their land. The wind power income to these residents will be a way to diversify their farm and ranch and have another income as well as benefiting EVERYONE in the county.

In conclusion, I ask for your approval of the Crocker Wind Farm Permit. I am also asking you to please help preserve our rights as landowners.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jody Obermeier

