

I would like to share the following prepared statement on behalf of the Governor's Office of Economic Development, which would urge your favorable consideration of the benefits that wind energy projects such as this one, have for South Dakota.

It's been said time and time again—if there are two things South Dakota is abundant in, it's opportunity and wind. So when Xcel Energy first announced plans for a 1,500 megawatt wind project back in March, generating nearly \$800 million in investment into our state, we were excited to support these efforts. But GOED's involvement in and support for wind energy extends far prior to this March announcement. In fact, my office has worked for several years with Geronimo Energy to support its plans to expand its overall wind energy portfolio within our state, so today's proposal before the Commission is by no means a new project to my office, nor is Geronimo Energy a stranger to me or my colleagues at GOED.

At GOED, we believe the future of energy production in South Dakota is here and it is real. It is obvious that renewable energy provides a secure, domestic and sustainable source of energy for our state and nation—be it solar or wind. We see tremendous economic development opportunities from these types of projects.

On average, more than 25 percent of South Dakota's power generation comes from wind power. As a matter of fact, South Dakota currently has over 980 megawatts of wind power capacity and produces enough energy to power more than 260,000 homes.

But this is what excites us even more: we have the *potential* to produce more than 3 million gigawatt-hours of energy on an annual basis, and according to the PUC, if South Dakota was able to harness the entirety

of that wind energy potential, we could provide power for almost the entire United States!

While we don't currently have that wind harnessed, South Dakota does rank in the top five states for wind energy potential. We believe our wide open spaces and high quality wind resources can provide much more wind power for the citizens of our state, as well as those in parts of the country that do not enjoy South Dakota's ample wind resource.

In the past decade, South Dakota has seen tremendous job creation and capital investment in renewable energy. Wind power has contributed more than \$2 billion in capital investment and directly created more than 500 jobs. These projects produce ongoing revenue streams for our state – revenue that doesn't depend on taxes on our citizens. And many of the jobs created by these projects are excellent, high-wage jobs based in our rural communities.

We recognize there is an important local discussion that must take place concerning any project, and therefore we do not take a position on siting the projects such as this. However, my office sees clear benefits to expanded wind power production in our state and is quite pleased to offer our support for expansion of wind energy in South Dakota. I would urge your favorable consideration of the project. Thank you.