

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 FOR A WIND ENERGY FACILITY AND A 345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE IN
CLARK COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA, FOR CROCKER WIND FARM

SD PUC DOCKET EL-17-055

PREFILED TESTIMONY OF WENDY CHRISTMAN
ON BEHALF OF CROCKER WIND FARM, LLC

April 13, 2018

1 **I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND**

2

3 **Q. Please state your name and address.**

4 A. My name is Wendy Christman, and my address is 16049 420 Ave, Clark SD 57225.

5

6 **Q. Please describe your familiarity with the Crocker Wind Farm (the “Project”).**

7 A. I am a participating landowner in the Project. When Crocker Wind Farm, LLC
8 (“Crocker” or “Applicant”) came to our family with the opportunity to be participating
9 landowners in the Project, we decided it was what was best for our land, our family,
10 and our community.

11

12 **Q. What is the purpose of your testimony?**

13 A. The purpose of my testimony is to explain the benefits the Project will bring to our
14 entire community, and how the Project will aid people, like my family, who seek to
15 continue making a living off the land. I also want to increase awareness that it is the
16 consumer and society in general who are demanding renewable, green energy as
17 the way of the future.

18

19 **Q. Please describe your home.**

20 A. My husband and I purchased our farm in the Crocker Hills in 1979 and we have lived
21 there ever since. We raise beef cattle, grains, and hay. We also love to hunt and
22 fish. Annually, for over 30 years, we have raised and released pheasants into food
23 plots and shelter belts, which we, ourselves, planted. We take good care of our land
24 and consider ourselves conservationists. The decisions we make are always for the
25 betterment of the land.

26

27 **II. BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT**

28

29 **Q. Why did you decide to participate in the Project?**

30 A. My husband and I recognized that the Project is a great opportunity not only for our
31 family, but also for our community and the environment. Several factors informed

1 our support for the Project and our decision to sign on as participating landowners.
2 Our knowledge and experience from many years of farming and from my husband's
3 pipefitting career showed us how the Project will benefit our family by providing a
4 steady source of income to supplement the living we make raising cattle on our farm.
5

6 In addition to our own experiences, we did a great deal of research and visited
7 landowners actually living among wind turbines. I have a deep love for the land, our
8 family life on the farm, and the cattle that we raise as our primary source of income.
9 We would not be placing turbines on our land if doing so would negatively impact our
10 cattle or the health of our family.
11

12 In addition to benefiting our family, the Project will greatly help our community
13 through increased tax revenue and a much-needed boost to the local economy. The
14 Project also provides a clean, renewable source of energy with undeniable benefits
15 to the environment, and society in general.
16

17 Overall, we decided to sign with the Project because we believe it will be good for
18 our family, our farm, our community, and the environment. Clark is our county seat
19 and this Project would help restore and bring life back to our town, county and
20 surrounding areas. We have been offered an opportunity to accomplish this!
21

22 **Q. Describe your interactions with Crocker and Geronimo Energy ("Geronimo").**

23 A. Geronimo is a wonderful, wonderful company. I believe the Crocker and Geronimo
24 people to be highly professional, with a commitment not only to the landowners, but
25 to the community, as well. We have worked closely with the Project Manager, for
26 whom we have the utmost respect, for over 3 1/2 years.
27

28 My husband and I dropped in at the company's headquarters last summer, and were
29 fortunate to personally meet its Founder, who is a farm boy himself and who came
30 out of a meeting to make time for us, and several staff members. After only a few
31 minutes, we were made to feel as if we were old friends who shared the same

1 principles and values. Looking one another in the eye, a firm handshake, and the
2 giving of one's word was as binding as a legal, written contract when doing business
3 in days gone by . . . that's the feeling we shared. Our faith in this company was
4 strengthened and reinforced even more by our visit that day.

5
6 This company's integrity is to be admired. They have worked tirelessly in effort to
7 respectfully accommodate tower placement requests of those not in the
8 Project. They have voluntarily conducted studies, which were not required, to show
9 that the health and welfare of the community and the environment will not be
10 harmed. This, too, affirms my consistent faith and trust in Crocker and Geronimo.

11
12 **Q. What does the Project mean for you and your family?**

13 A. To our family, the Project means stability and investment in our future as well as in
14 our community's future. The Project provides my family with an additional, stable
15 source of income to supplement the living we make on our farm.

16
17 Our primary source of income is raising beef cattle, but, as many farmers can relate,
18 times are not always easy. Due to the high interest rates of the 1980s, we would not
19 have been able to survive solely on our farm and agricultural income. In addition to
20 farming our land and raising our children, I have been employed by the Clark School
21 System for 25 years as a substitute teacher, and my husband had to work part-time
22 in the power plants, traveling the surrounding states. We experienced first-hand the
23 benefit of infrastructure development and expansion in our area when my husband
24 had the opportunity to build the Northern Border Pipeline pumping station in the
25 1990s, which is located approximately a mile and a quarter from our home.

26
27 Wind is a new crop on our land that we have the right to harvest, and this Project
28 allows us to do so. The Project will bring a stable source of income even in times of
29 varying and often poor prices for commodities, unpredictable markets, weather-
30 related hardships, and continued rising costs.

31

1 **Q. In your view, how will the Project benefit the community?**

2 A. The Project is an opportunity to restore and revitalize our community. The closing of
3 McCain's Foods processing plant several years ago had a devastating effect on
4 Clark County and the surrounding area, from which they have never really
5 recovered. Businesses closed, families left, and school enrollment dropped. When
6 the Project was offered to Clark County approximately eight years ago, it was a ray
7 of hope that would help restore and bring back life to our town, our county, and the
8 surrounding areas.

9

10 The Project will provide tax revenue and a much-needed boost to the local economy
11 through jobs and increased economic activity resulting from construction and
12 operation of the Project. The Project will create construction jobs, and the
13 construction workers will need housing, food, fuel, and maintenance for their
14 vehicles. All of this directly benefits local businesses. The tax revenue from the
15 Project can be put to great use improving the roads and funding our schools.

16

17 In addition, the participating landowners will receive income that will be spent in the
18 local community. My husband and I support our local Farmers' Elevator,
19 veterinarians, Community Oil Co-op, and all the businesses in Clark, as do others
20 participating in the Project. As a result, the Project will provide numerous benefits,
21 not only to participating landowners, but to all members of this community.

22

23 **III. PROPERTY RIGHTS**

24

25 **Q. There has been some discussion at the public hearing and in public**
26 **comments regarding landowner rights. Do you have a response?**

27 A. Yes. Wind energy is the future, and there is a high demand and a great need for
28 clean, renewable energy. We own this land, we pay taxes on it, and we have the
29 right to use our land to bring this clean energy source to our community. In our 38
30 years of planting crops, no one has ever raised a ruckus about whether we plant
31 wheat or corn or oats or soybeans. Just like our other crops, wind is a crop on our

1 land that we have the right to harvest. No one else has the right to dictate our
2 farming practices and income sources.

3

4 **IV. CONCLUSION**

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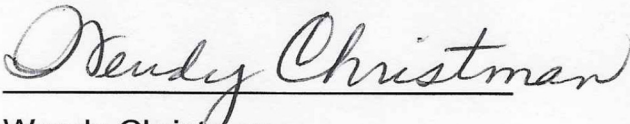
6 **Q. Does this conclude your rebuttal testimony?**

7 A. Yes.

8

9

10 Dated this 13th day of April, 2018.



11 Wendy Christman