Exhibit A6

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-___

PREFILED TESTIMONY OF ROB COPOULS
ON BEHALF OF CROCKER WIND FARM, LLC

December 15, 2017

I. INTRODUCTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Q. Please state your name and business address.

A. My name is Rob Copouls. I am employed by Westwood Professional Services, 7699 Anagram Drive, Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Q. Please describe your education and experience.

A. I have a B.S. in civil engineering from Valparaiso University, and I am a professional engineer licensed in several states. I have worked for Westwood Professional Services for more than 12 years and have worked in the renewable energy field on wind and solar projects for approximately 10 years. I have been a part of more than 100 projects, with roles ranging from project engineer to senior project manager. I am currently Operations Manager for my division, which includes more than 170 people who assist with wind, solar, and power delivery projects. A copy of my resume is included as Exhibit 1.

Q. What is your company's role with respect to the Crocker Wind Farm Project ("Project")?

A. Westwood Professional Services has assisted Crocker Wind Farm, LLC ("Crocker") with surveying, permitting support, engineering and design for the Project. I am the Senior Project Manager overseeing all aspects of the project for Westwood.

II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY

Q. What is the purpose of your Direct Testimony?

A. The purpose of my Direct Testimony is to describe the design and construction of the Project, provide an overview of its operation and maintenance, and discuss various design, construction, and operational considerations, including safety features, potential impacts on existing infrastructure and communications systems, and issues related to electromagnetic fields ("EMF") and stray voltage. I will also discuss the decommissioning and site restoration of the Project.

Q. Please identify the sections of the Application you are sponsoring.

A. I am sponsoring the following sections of the Application:

- Section 4.2: Wind Farm Facility
- Section 4.3: Information Concerning Transmission Facilities
- Section 4.5: Wind Farm Construction, Restoration, Operations and Maintenance Procedures
- Section 4.6: Transmission Facility Construction, Restoration, Operations and Maintenance Procedures
- Section 5.0: Decommissioning of Wind Energy Facilities
- Section 6.3: Equipment Procurement, Manufacture and Delivery (Time Schedule)
- Section 6.4: Construction (Time Schedule)
- Section 9.5.7: Telecommunications
- Section 9.7.3: Transportation
- Section 11.0: Reliability and Safety
- Appendix A: Typical Turbine Foundation
- Appendix B: Typical Transmission Structure Drawings
- Appendix G: Crocker Wind Farm Telecommunication Studies (Comsearch)
- Appendix J: Electric and Magnetic Field (EMF) Report

III. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Q. Please provide an overview of Project facilities, including related transmission facilities.

A. The proposed Project is an up to 400 megawatt ("MW") wind farm ("Wind Energy Facility") and an associated 345 kV transmission line ("Transmission Facility") and would include the following components:

- Up to 120 three-bladed, horizontal-axis wind turbines;

- Up to four permanent meteorological towers ("MET towers") and Sonic Detection and Ranging ("SoDAR") or Light Range Detection and Ranging ("LiDAR") units;
- Access roads, improvements to existing public and private roads, and temporary crane paths;
- Temporary laydown/staging areas, and temporary batch plant to mix concrete for tower foundations;
- Operations and maintenance ("O&M") facility;
- Underground and/or aboveground electrical collector and communication systems; and
- Project collection substation.

The Transmission Facility would include:

- Approximately 5.2 miles of 345 kV bundled conductors;
- Steel monopole structures;
- Temporary access roads;
- Temporary staging areas; and
- A switchyard with permanent access road.

Q. How and where will the Project interconnect to the electric grid?

A. The Project will interconnect at the proposed switchyard, which is approximately two miles north of the town of Crocker. Specifically, the Transmission Facility's route will run from the Project collection substation to the switchyard, where the power will transfer to the Basin Electric Groton-to-Watertown 345 kV transmission line, which is part of the SPP/WAPA Transmission line portfolio in Clark County.

Q. What is the proposed development schedule for the Project?

A. The Applicant has begun procurement of Project-specific equipment and is in the process of procuring turbines for the Project. Turbines will be allocated to the Project after meteorological and economic studies are completed to achieve the best match of turbines for the Project. Equipment could start arriving on-site as early as second quarter 2018, with construction beginning shortly thereafter.

IV. PROJECT DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Q. From an engineering and operational design perspective, please describe the turbines that may be used for the Project.

A. The Project would consist of up to 120 three-bladed, horizontal-axis wind turbines with an energy production range of 2.0 MW to 3.45 MW. Specifically, Crocker is considering the following turbine models: Gamesa G126 2.625 MW; GE 2.5-116; Vestas V110 STE 2.0 MW; and Vestas V136 3.45 MW. Crocker has not yet finalized the specific turbine choice for the Project and will do so prior to construction. However, the configuration proposed in the Application would be the same for any of the four turbine models under consideration, as well as any other turbine model selected.

All representative turbine models have active yaw and pitch regulation and asynchronous generations and are capable of operating with adjusted cut-in speeds and full blade feathering. Each model also has Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition ("SCADA") communication technology to control and monitor the Project. Additional information concerning Project turbines is included in Section 4.2.1 of the Application.

Q. Please describe the foundations that will be constructed for the turbines.

A. The wind turbine towers will be connected by anchor bolts to a concrete foundation, which will use a pad-and-pier tower mounting system consisting of top and bottom templates. These templates consist of anchor bolts and reinforcing steel bar (rebar); they are placed within the excavated portion of the turbine footing and filled with concrete. The anchor bolts protrude from the concrete pad surface and the turbine base is fastened to these bolts. The turbine pad dimensions are approximately 20 feet in above-ground diameter and typically range in depth from eight to nine feet. An approximate height of one-half to one foot of the turbine pad remains above-grade. Geotechnical surveys, turbine tower load specifications, and cost

considerations, among other factors, will dictate final design parameters of the foundations. Additional detail is provided in Section 4.2.1 of the Application.

Q. Will the collection system be installed underground?

A. Generally, yes. Up to 157 trench miles of underground collector lines will be installed by trenching, plowing, or, where needed, directionally boring the cables underground to avoid sensitive environmental conditions. Generally, collector lines will be installed underground, but cabling may go aboveground if conflicts with existing underground utilities or other infrastructure cannot be resolved, and aboveground cabling will resolve the conflict. Collector lines may also be installed aboveground pursuant to requests by the road authority if the lines are located in existing public road rights-of-way. Additional detail is provided in Section 4.2.6 of the Application.

Q. Could you describe the Project collection substation?

A. The Project collection substation will include a control house, power transformers, switches, metering, and other equipment needed for the safe electrical operations of the Project and interconnection to the Transmission Facility, which will interconnect the Project to the electrical grid via the switchyard. Once construction is complete, the substation will occupy an area of approximately 500 feet by 500 feet. Additional detail is provided in Section 4.2.8 of the Application.

Q. Please describe the O&M facility that will be constructed for the Project.

A. The O&M facility will be co-located with the Project substation and will include an O&M building to house office space and equipment used for Project maintenance and operation, as well as an associated storage area. O&M buildings are typically between 3,000 and 5,000 feet, with an adjacent parking lot. The O&M building will require a building permit from Clark County, in which it will be located. Additional detail is provided in Section 4.2.5 of the Application.

Q. Please discuss the design and installation of the permanent MET towers.

A. Crocker proposes to construct up to four permanent MET towers with the potential for a SoDAR and/or a LiDAR unit(s). The permanent MET towers will be free standing, equal to the turbine hub height, and located around the perimeter of the Project. Final locations will be selected based on the turbine model selected.

Q. With respect to Project access roads, how will access road requirements differ during and after construction?

A. The Project access roads will provide access to turbines during construction, as well as for maintenance and monitoring during operations. The construction corridor for access roads will be approximately 120 feet wide. During construction, the access roads will be approximately 34 feet to accommodate transportation of heavy construction equipment, crawler cranes and Project components. After construction is complete, the temporary crane should will be removed and the access roads will be reduced to their permanent width of up to 20 feet. The final surface of the permanent access road will be gravel. Additional information concerning access roads is included in Section 4.2.3 of the Application.

Q. Please describe the design of the Transmission Facility.

A. The Transmission Facility will consist of a 5.2-mile-long single circuit 345 kV transmission line, temporary access roads and laydown/staging areas, and a switchyard. The transmission line will be constructed on steel monopole structures spaced in intervals of 400 to 1,000 feet. Monopole structures are generally placed on foundations between six and 11 feet in diameter and are typically 100 to 120 feet tall.

The switchyard (the aboveground interconnecting facility) requires a construction workspace of approximately 16.8 acres, with the final fenced-in area anticipated to be approximately 500 feet by 500 feet. The switchyard components will be mounted on concrete pads and concrete pier foundations. For electrical and fire safety, the switchyard will be will be graveled to maintain the area free of vegetation. The area will be fenced to prevent unauthorized entry by individuals and wildlife. Once

construction is complete, the switchyard would be maintained and operated by the utility. Additional detail is provided in Section 4.3 of the Application.

Q. Has Crocker developed a route for the proposed Transmission Facility?

A. Yes. The proposed transmission line route ("Proposed Route") extends from the Project collection substation in Section 30 of Township 119N, Range 58W, to the proposed switchyard, which will be located approximately two miles north of the town of Crocker in Section 9 of Township 119N, Range 58W. The Proposed Route will utilize a 150-foot right-of-way plus the adjacent right-of-way where applicable, but only 100 feet of the corridor are anticipated to be impacted by construction. The Transmission Facility is co-located with existing county roadways or along existing property lines for nearly the entire route.

Q. Describe how the Transmission Facility will be constructed.

A. Construction of the Transmission Facility will begin after applicable federal, state, and local approvals have been obtained, soil conditions at structure (pole) locations are established, and final design is completed. The Proposed Route has been routed to minimize tree clearing to the extent practicable, and Crocker anticipates that only minimal grading will be needed because there is little elevation change along the Proposed Route.

The construction staging area for the transmission facilities will likely be partially shared with that used for the Wind Energy Facility. Staging involves delivering the equipment and materials to construct the new transmission line facilities. Structures will be moved from the staging areas, delivered to staked locations, and placed within the right-of-way until the structure is set.

Crocker will clear the construction area and adjacent tower assembly area of vegetation. Then, the topsoil and subsoil will be excavated for the pole foundation, concrete poured, and pile driven to establish the foundation. The monopole structures for the Project will then be secured to the concrete foundations. After the

structures are secured, the insulators will be attached to the structure arms. The conductors and shield wires will then be strung from each structure. As construction on each parcel is completed, disturbed areas will be restored to their original condition to the extent practicable. Additional detail concerning construction of the Transmission Facility is available in Section 4.6 of the Application.

Q. Discuss the personnel that will be involved in the construction of the Project.

A. Construction of the Project will involve both skilled and unskilled labor, including foremen, carpenters, iron workers, electricians, millwrights, and heavy equipment operators. A construction management company will be contracted with to provide to provide management level oversight, safety, coordination with the applicate and other stakeholders, and QA/QC. Construction of the Project is anticipated to generate approximately 250 jobs during construction (~200 jobs for Wind Energy Facility, ~50 jobs for the Transmission Facility) at peak demand.

V. PROJECT OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Q. Discuss the personnel that will be involved in operation and maintenance of the Project.

A. As discussed in Section 4.5.10 of the Application, the Wind Energy Facility's expected life span is approximately 30 years. During this time, a maintenance crew will be on-site 24-hours a day, seven days a week to monitor turbine operations from the O&M building and conduct maintenance activities, as needed.

The estimated service life of the Transmission Facility is approximately 40 years; operations and maintenance personnel will conduct ground and/or aerial inspections and prune or remove vegetation to ensure safe operations.

Overall, it is predicted that, during operation and maintenance, the Project will create approximately 18 full time jobs paying around $1.1 million per year. Additional detail is also included in Sections 4.6.5 and 9.7.1.2 of the Application.

Q. Discuss the inspections that will be conducted and when they will occur.

A. All major components of the wind turbines will undergo routine maintenance according to schedules established by the component manufacturer. With respect to the Transmission Facility, inspections will be performed monthly by truck or air to ensure the line is fully functional and no encroachments on the right-of-way (e.g., vegetation) are present.

Q. How will the Project be monitored between inspections?

A. All proposed turbine models have SCADA communication technology to control and monitor the Project. This system permits automatic, independent operation and remote supervision, allowing simultaneous on-site and off-site control of the wind turbines.

Q. How reliable will the wind turbines and associated infrastructure be?

A. Consistent with other utility-scale wind projects, the Wind Energy Facility is anticipated to be available at least 97 percent of the time.

Q. How reliable will the Transmission Facility be?

A. The average annual availability of transmission infrastructure is in excess of 99 percent, and the Transmission Facility is not anticipated to deviate from this average.

VI. DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Q. What safety features will be incorporated into the Project?

A. Crocker has incorporated or will incorporate a number of safety and security measures to protect persons and property, including, but not limited to:

- Wind turbine towers locations set back from residences in accordance with or in excess of applicable regulations and industry standards;
- Wind turbine locations will comply with applicable noise requirements;

- The Project collector substation, switchyard, and O&M facility will be surrounded by permanent fencing;
- During construction, temporary (safety) fencing will be used to restrict access to the site;
- Warning signs will be in place and Project facilities (turbine tower doors, gates at facilities, etc.) will be locked when not in use;
- Regular maintenance and inspections will be conducted to address potential blade failures;
- Where necessary or requested by landowners, Crocker will construct gates or fences;
- The contractor will develop and implement a construction safety plan.

With respect to the Transmission Facility specifically, the design will comply with applicable standards regarding clearance to ground, utilities, and buildings. Crocker will use proper signage and guard structures when stringing wire across roads and railroads. The Transmission Facility will also be equipped with protective devices to safeguard the public if a line or pole falls. Proper signage will also be posted. Additional detail is provided in Sections 11.1 and 11.2 of the Application.

Q. How has Crocker accounted for existing infrastructure (including existing communications systems) in designing the Project?

A. Crocker has conducted a microwave beam path analysis and sited in a manner that avoids all identified microwave beam paths and communication systems. Crocker also submitted a Project notification letter to the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration ("NTIA"). NTIA indicated that no federal agencies identified any concerns regarding blockage of their radio frequency transmissions. However, the Department of Energy ("DOE") noted the Project has potential to interfere with DOE Western operations. Western has three paths that run through the Project Area from the Clark Repeater. However, in a December 1, 2017 letter, the agency notes the Project will not cause problems for Western.

A portion of the Project area is located within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ("NOAA") Notification Zone, meaning that impacts to the surrounding weather surveillance radar are unlikely; however, NOAA's Radar Operations Center will track the Project through completion to fully understand and anticipate any impacts. The Project team has worked with NOAA on similar issues in the past and anticipates any concerns can be addressed.

In addition, Crocker is coordinating to determine the potential for inductive interference on copper telephone lines owned by Interstate Telecommunications Cooperative ("ITC") in the Project area. Crocker will enter into an agreement with ITC to ensure any interference will be mitigated prior to construction.

Additional information is provided in Section 9.5.7 of the Application.

Q. Will the Project participate in the South Dakota One-Call program?

A. Yes. The Project will utilize the One-Call program to locate underground infrastructure prior to construction. In addition, once construction is completed, the Project will register its facilities with the One-Call program.

Q. With respect to use of existing local roads as haul roads, will Crocker coordinate with local road authorities regarding the use and restoration of those roads?

A. Yes. Crocker will coordinate with applicable local road authorities to establish road use agreements that will be in place before construction to ensure safe and efficient use and to minimize and mitigate Project impacts to haul roads. The agreements will also address improvements to existing roads and restoration of haul roads to their pre-construction condition following construction. Additional information concerning haul roads is included in Sections 4.2.3 and 9.7.3 of the Application.

Q. What does the term EMF mean with respect to the Project?

A. The term EMF refers to electric and magnetic fields that are present around any electrical device. Electric fields arise from the voltage or electrical charges, and magnetic fields arise from the flow of electricity or current that travels along transmission lines, power collection (feeder) lines, substation transformers, house wiring, and electrical appliances.

Q. Are impacts due to EMF anticipated with respect to the Project?

A. No impacts due to EMF are anticipated. Project facilities will be set back from residences in excess of state standards, where EMF will be at background levels. In addition, Crocker conducted an EMF study for the Transmission Facility, and the results of that study show that EMF levels are well within industry standards. As a result, EMF-related issues are not anticipated. Additional detail is provided in Section 11 and Appendix J of the Application.

Q. What is stray voltage?

A. Stray voltage is a natural phenomenon that is the result of low levels of electrical current flowing between two points that are not directly connected. Electrical systems, including farm systems and utility distribution systems, must be adequately grounded to the earth to ensure continuous safety and reliability, and to minimize this current flow. Stray voltage does not cause electrocution and is not related to ground current, EMF, or earth currents. Stray voltage issues are usually related to the distribution and service lines directly serving a farm, or wiring on a farm, affecting confined animals.

Q. Are impacts due to stray voltage anticipated with respect to the Project?

A. No impacts due to stray voltage are anticipated. Project design will comply with all applicable electrical code requirements, including measures (such as proper grounding) to prevent stray voltage problems. In addition, stray voltage is not an issue for the Transmission Facility, as it is not a distribution-level facility. Additional information concerning stray voltage is provided in Section 11 of the Application.

Q. What steps will the Project take to prepare for a potential emergency situation at the Project site during construction and when the Project is operational?

A. Crocker and its construction team will coordinate with first responders, including but not limited to air ambulance, local sheriff's offices, and local fire services to develop a emergency management plan during construction and operation of the Project. Crocker will also coordinate with local first responders to offer information about the Project and answer questions response teams may have regarding Project plans and details.

Q. Will the Project be designed, constructed, and operated in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations?

A. Yes.

VII. DECOMMISSIONING AND SITE RESTORATION

Q. What is the estimated life of the Project?

A. The anticipated life of the Project is approximately 30 years from the date of commencement of commercial operation.

Q. Will the Project be decommissioned at the end of its useful life?

A. Once the facilities constructed have reached the end of their useful life, it may be determined that it is appropriate to retrofit or otherwise upgrade the Project facilities and continue operations. If retrofitting or upgrading is not done, then the Project will be decommissioned.

Q. If the Project is decommissioned, will the Project comply with all applicable state and local requirements for structure removal and site restoration?

A. Yes. Decommissioning will comply with applicable state and local requirements, including the decommissioning requirements of Clark County. More specifically, consistent with the terms of the wind lease and easement agreements with individual landowners, Crocker will conduct various decommissioning and restoration activities,

including turbine removal, removal of turbine foundations to a depth of 48 inches below grade, and removal and/or disassembly of other Project facilities, as described in more detail in Section 5.0 of the Application.

Q. Has Crocker analyzed the cost of decommissioning the Project?

A. A conservative decommissioning cost estimate in current dollars is between $100,000 to $150,000 per turbine after salvage value, including associated facilities. This cost estimate is based on on-site experience, labor costs, and material prices from Geronimo's operating project's decommissioning plans. Because of the uncertainties surrounding future decommissioning costs and salvage values, Crocker will review and update the cost estimate of decommissioning and restoration for the Project every five years after Project commissioning.

Q. Who will be responsible for covering all anticipated decommissioning costs?

A. Crocker will be responsible for covering all anticipated decommissioning costs.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Q. Does this conclude your Direct Testimony?

A. Yes.

Dated this 15th day of December, 2017

Robert A. Copouls

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Rob Copouls