

UPDATED

**South Dakota County Assessor Survey**

**South Dakota County Assessor Survey Analysis**

A survey of assessors in 8 counties in South Dakota which wind farms currently are operational has been undertaken. The supervisors or deputy supervisors of assessments were interviewed. The interviews were intended to allow the assessment officials to share their experiences regarding the impact of the wind farm(s) upon the market values and/or the assessed values of surrounding properties. The interviews were conversational, but thoroughly discussed residential and agricultural values and impacts. The interviews were conducted on November 7, 2017, and updated April 12, 2018.

**Conclusions of the Study**

Based on these interviews:

- Without exception, the interviewees reported that there was no market evidence to support a negative impact upon residential property values as a result of the development of, and the proximity to, a wind farm facility. In some counties, this results from the very rural nature of the area in which the projects are located.
- In the past 18 months, two assessor’s offices have experienced a real estate tax appeal based upon wind farm-related concerns, but the appeals were denied by both counties, Aurora County and Campbell County. As of the date of this report, there are more than 7 wind farms with 400 wind turbines within these counties. There have been no reductions in assessed valuations related to wind turbines.
- Residential assessed values have fluctuated consistently countywide as influenced by market conditions, with no regard for proximity to a wind farm.
- Agricultural properties are taxed based upon a productivity formula that is not impacted by market data and by external influences.

**Scope of Project**

The supervisors or deputy supervisors of assessments were interviewed. Each of the interviewees was familiar with the wind farm(s) located within their respective county. The following is the list of County Supervisors of Assessments contacted:

1. Aurora County	Ms. Leah Vissia	605-942-7164
2. Brookings County	Mr. Jacob Brehmer (Deputy)	605-696-8220
3. Campbell County	Ms. Jill Hoogeveen	605-955-3577
4. Charles Mix County	Ms. Denise Weber	605-487-7382
5. Day County	Ms. Dari Schlotte	605-345-9502
6. Hyde County	Ms. Carrie Stevenson	605-852-2070
7. Jerauld County	Ms. Janice Bender	605-539-9701
8. McPherson County	Ms. Lanette Butler	605-439-3663

A map indicating the number of wind farms in each of these counties is included in this memorandum. A second map illustrates the number of the wind farms located in each of these counties.

## **Residential Market Values**

Without exception, the interviewees reported that there was no market evidence to support a negative impact upon residential property values as a result of the development of, and the proximity to, a wind farm facility. Either as a request by a county board, in an attempt to appropriately assess newly constructed residences, or to support current assessed values, the supervisors of assessments have been particularly attentive to market activity in the area of the wind farms.

Aurora, Brookings, Day, and McPherson Counties' Supervisors of Assessments all stated that a majority of the wind turbines were placed with grazing and pasture land used for raising cattle. Each one of the assessors made it a point to note that they had personally witnessed the cows grazing right alongside turbines, indicating that the turbines had no effect, of any kind, on the animals.

Ms. Lanette Butler, the McPherson County Supervisor of Assessments, lives proximate to wind farm and is a participating land owner with five wind turbines on her property. She also stated that she is a former employee of Acciona Energia (owner of Tatanka Wind) prior to becoming the McPherson County Supervisor of Assessments and has been pleased with the work the company performs and the strict policies the company carries out for noise and wildlife safety. She also stated that the only way the turbines are audibly noticeable is on very quiet days with very minimal wind.

## **Residential Assessed Values, Complaints/Tax Appeal Filings**

The assessors reported that there have been no successful tax appeal filings based upon wind farm issues. Although there have been two counties with tax appeals that were denied by the county boards in Aurora County and Campbell County

Ms. Carrie Stevenson, the Hyde County Supervisor of Assessments, did mention that the morning on the day the survey was taken Hyde County held its County Commissioners meeting. The topic of some of the meeting revolved around wind farms in the county. In attendance were approximately 30 residents, or a little over 2% of the total population of Hyde County. These residents showed up to voice their various complaints to the County Commissioners. The complaints were listened to and validated, yet in the end, there were no changes to property values given.

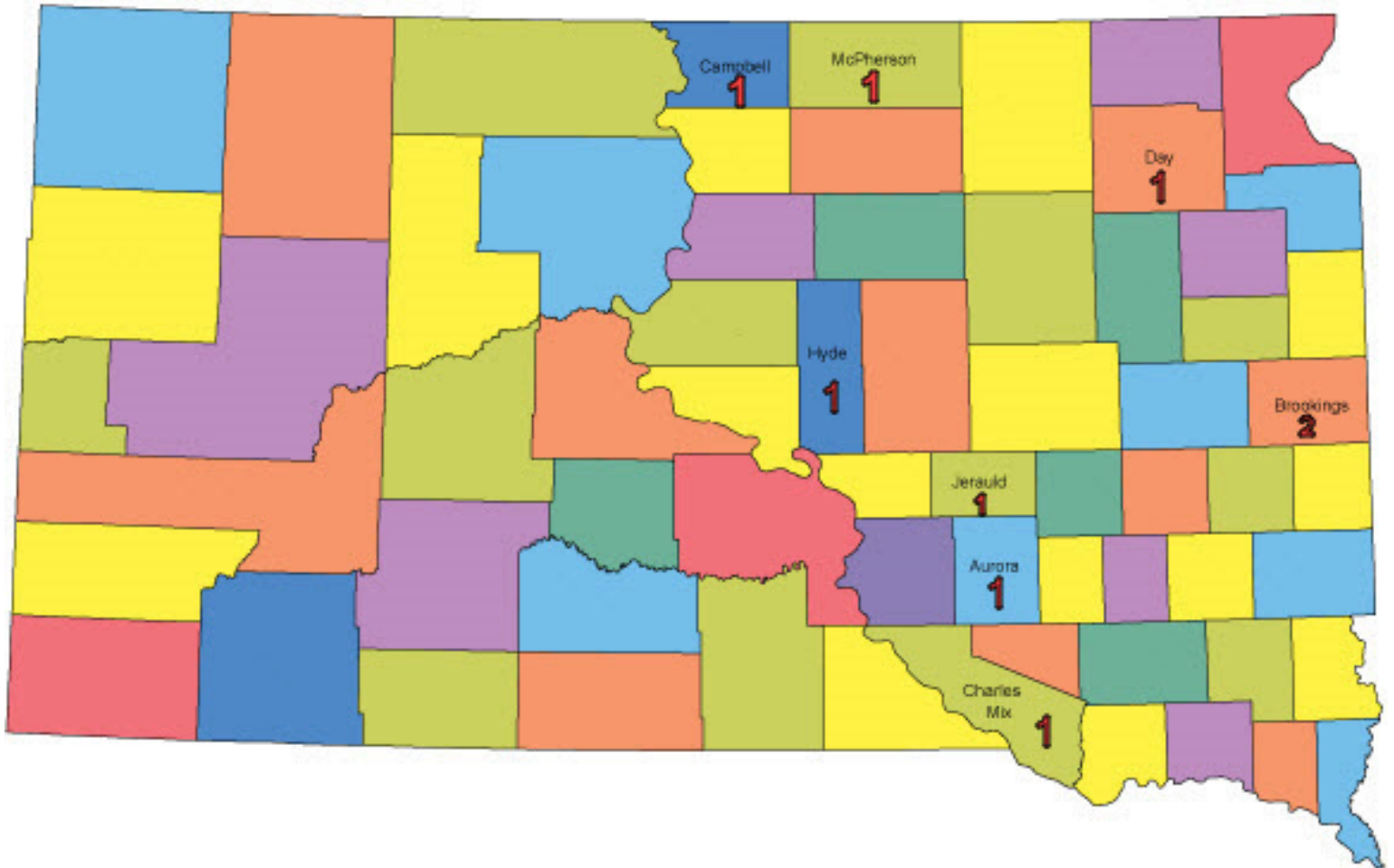
Consistently, the assessors reported that whatever initial concern there may have been regarding property values during the planning and approval stages of the various wind farms dissipated once the wind farm was constructed. Repeatedly, the assessors would state that the revenue that would come into the county and to each individual farmer would outweigh any initial concern that the residents would have about the wind farms joining their communities.

## **Agricultural Values/Assessed Values**

The assessed values of agricultural properties are established based upon a productivity formula and are not driven by market data. Reportedly, assessed values of agricultural properties have been steady or increasing in recent years and are projected to continue increasing for the near future. The assessors reported that no major complaints have been received and/or no tax appeal filings have been filed for agricultural properties within the wind farm footprint.

Based on this survey, it does not appear that the Supervisors of Assessments in the 6 surveyed in South Dakota have reason to believe that the location of wind turbines in their county has had a negative impact on property values.

South Dakota



# Map of South Dakota Counties Surveyed

Wind Farm Count by County

\*25 Turbines or Higher\*



**Note:** As depicted on this map from the AWEA, as of the date of this survey, the locations of certain wind farms are approximations. In some instances, the wind farms are incorrectly shown to be located in adjacent counties. This map also shows the locations of smaller wind farms, but for the accuracy of this study we have only focused on the farms with 25 turbines or higher.