

Commissioners,

My name is Erik Johnson and I live 8 miles south of Avon. I am an investor in Prevailing Winds, which means I put my own money at risk to bring the project benefits to this community, and I am also on the board of managers.

I believe in wind and solar electricity generation because it requires no fuel, and therefore produces no emissions beyond what is necessary to construct the facilities. Retiring older coal plants in favor of new wind, solar, and natural gas plants is a win for the environment and for rural economies.

I have taken it upon myself to write a lot of what I call "editorials" in the local papers over the last few years to inform people about how renewable energy works, why I believe it is the future of energy production, and also to counter a lot of the negative information, or in many cases misinformation, about renewables in general and wind energy in particular.

I am an engineer by training, and I also have experience in finance, so I have a good working knowledge of how the energy industries work. I have tried to rely on reputable peer reviewed independent studies for the information that I relay to the local readers.

It has been very gratifying for me to see the PUC also go through a rigorous, fact-based analysis of wind energy, proving or disproving various claims made about wind energy in the process of approving both the Crocker and Dakota Range wind farm permits. I commend the commissioners for conducting thorough evidentiary hearings, hiring expert witnesses, and taking sworn testimony to evaluate each permit application on the facts. When the facts come through, a rational decision in favor of wind energy is the logical outcome.

It is possible that we are going to hear some opinions and claims tonight that may or may not be based in fact. But after seeing the level of professionalism exhibited by PUC staff and all of the Commissioners, I have great confidence that this permit application **will** be evaluated on the facts and will comply with the laws of the State of South Dakota. I want to personally thank the Commissioners and PUC staff for all they do for our State and for ensuring that the truth is heard.

Thank you.