

A few months ago, when I heard Prevailing Winds forced Basin Electric to buy the electricity from the proposed project, and after seeing Prevailing Winds was bought out by SPower, all before WAPA was to finish their environmental assessment study, I got pretty depressed about any possibility that the PUC would deny this permit. So, I emailed the PUC staff and asked them if the Avon public input meeting, when it occurred would just be a charade, and all of this was already cut and dried. They assured me that it would not be a charade and that they would be working overtime to assure everybody got a fair opportunity in this process. I was ok with that answer. Then a few weeks ago the Governor gave SPower, owner of Prevailing Winds 4.3 million dollars of economic development (taxpayer) money. This is all very troubling.

Two years ago, in August, the PUC held a similar meeting for the same project in Avon. After a lot of opposition, a week or so later PW withdrew their project, saying “the motion to withdraw the application cited misinformation surrounding the project. The organizers said they plan to better inform the community on the wind project and allow Prevailing Winds to revisit their options regarding the project” (Yankton Press and Dakotan). They also said in that article that they would not break up the project into smaller units. But in December 2016 they formed 13 different LLC’s and did break up the project. They had no public information meetings.

I knew the reason that they pulled their application was because they saw 65 names as party status, and these were names that they thought they would sign up for easements but found out these people were not going to sign up, in fact they would oppose them in Pierre at a future hearing. I spelled this out in my book “Paradise Destroyed” on page 72.

But after 2 years, they finally admitted the truth, on page 5, lines 133-137 of James Damon ‘s testimony in the present application, they stated they didn’t have the land signed up they needed, nor did they have a buyer for the electricity.

So, we see that the whole meeting in August of 2016 was about a bluff. The map was a bogus map, the projections of money were bogus, and the tower locations were bogus. It was all a bluff. (Pages 73-75 Paradise Destroyed). They were bluffing the community, the county officials and the PUC. Now they are coming back again. Is there any more reason to believe them now than two years ago?

When raising my children, I tried to give them some moral training. I have told them “If you always tell the truth, I can always trust you, but lie to me once and I can never trust you again.”

That statement really hit home when I listened to the Crocker Wind Farm people lie under oath more than once, but at the hearing when they got their permit approved, I heard the Commission say to them “I am going to give them the benefit of the doubt”.

So, put yourself in our shoes. All we are trying to do is save our homes and quality of life. And who is watching out for us? I would like to think at some point we, the residents and taxpayers should get the “benefit of the doubt”, not the multinational corporations that build and use these wind projects for tax shelters.

One thing is certain. I think the PUC knows a whole lot more about wind energy since August of 2016. And each public input meeting and evidentiary hearing brings more truth out and puts a human face on what is really happening. I just hope the PUC doesn’t wake up too late to all the negative effects on people that these giant turbines produce. The wind industry puts confidentiality clauses and neighbor agreements in contracts for a reason: To prevent people from complaining about the ill effects of living near a wind turbine. Your decisions on these projects are going to affect people’s lives for a long, long time. I hope the PUC yearns to learn more and puts people before money, taxes, and before politics.

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