



CENTER *for* RURAL AFFAIRS

VALUES | WORTH | ACTION

December 19, 2018

Public Utilities Commission
500 E. Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Dakota Range III (EL18-046)

The Center for Rural Affairs is a private non-profit that works to promote social and economic justice, environmental stewardship, and strengthen rural communities. This includes engaging with rural citizens on decisions that affect their lives such as how they use electricity to power their homes and businesses, and the way that energy is generated.

Wind energy has proven to be beneficial to rural communities by providing new employment opportunities, new sources of revenue, cheap and renewable power, and new source of income for many farmers and ranchers. States with substantial wind energy potential have the ability to take advantage of this resource to produce clean energy while bringing with it a new economic driver.

The National Renewable Energy Lab's (NREL) wind resource assessment data highlights South Dakota's potential to generate wind energy. The state was able to generate over 30% of its energy from wind, or more than 977 megawatts of installed capacity in 2017.

The Dakota Range III project has the capacity to support up to 250 jobs related to construction, and 10 full-time jobs related to long-term operations of facilities. These employees are often located in or near rural communities where they feed into the local economy. According to the NREL's Jobs and Economic Development Impact (JEDI) model, a 151 megawatt project could provide \$455,400 in annual land lease payments to landowners, offering them an additional source of income. These projects also generate new tax revenue which assists counties in funding essential services like schools, fire, emergency services, and police, as well as road improvements.

To date, the resources developed in South Dakota have made a significant difference to local economies. The wind industry supports up to 2,000 jobs in operations and maintenance, construction, manufacturing, and many other support sectors. The state has several

manufacturing facilities associated with wind energy production. Landowners throughout the state also receive about \$3 million each year in direct land-lease payments, providing a new stable source of income. The Dakota Range III project has the potential to generate \$26 million in income for landowners over its estimated 30 year life span.

Projects like the Dakota Range III have the potential to bring these numerous benefits to rural communities. Wind energy has proven to offer new economic opportunity in rural areas, connecting them to the growing clean energy economy. Not only have wind projects generated clean and renewable energy; they have also created new income for farmers and ranchers, new tax revenue, and jobs located in local communities.

Respectfully submitted,

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