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April 11, 2019

The Honorable South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
500 E. Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501 Subject;
Regarding PUC Docket EL18-053 – Deuel Harvest North Wind Farm

Dear South Dakota Public Utilities Commission,

As president of South Dakota Farmers Union (SDFU) I represent over 15,000 members who annually form policy addressing concerns for their farms, communities and state. Since 1916, when our charter was established, SDFU has worked to protect and enhance the economic well-being and quality of life for family farmers, ranchers and rural communities through advocating grassroots-driven policy positions adopted by its membership. With strong approval of its membership, it is, and has been, the policy of SDFU to support and advocate for policies that promote growth of wind development, which provides significant benefits to farmers and ranchers who are currently facing severe economic difficulties.

Over the past decade, wind power in South Dakota has contributed more than \$2 billion in capital investment to our state for the construction and maintenance of over 14 wind projects now in operation. These projects, along with the South Dakota businesses that supply goods and services to the wind industry, support nearly 2,000 good-paying jobs in our state with numerous wind power projects with more being planned for the future, Deuel Harvest North Wind Farm being one of them.

South Dakota is one of only two states where wind power provides over 30 percent of in-state power generation. That's power that the whole region can count on. In fact, the regional operator of our energy system has noted they can reliably meet over 50 percent of the current demand for our 13-state region with wind power ... and that's not even the limit.

The growth in wind power in our state and region did not happen overnight or without careful planning and advances in technology. Wind works well with South Dakota's other major power resources such as hydroelectric, coal-fired, and natural gas power plants, adding to our fuel diversity and reducing our reliance on imports. That diversity helps protect our businesses and homeowners from price and supply volatility, as well as changing national and global policies.

Beyond helping keep electricity prices stable, wind power can also benefit the families and communities who host the projects on their land. Wind farms, create a new, drought-resistant revenue stream that can help family farmers and ranchers expand their operations or withstand market fluctuations in crop prices like they are currently experiencing.

To date, we have seen success with wind power development. The future remains bright with prospects for more economic opportunity for South Dakotans. South Dakota's wide open spaces and high quality wind resource, such as in Deuel County, can potentially provide affordable and reliable electricity to those living beyond our borders. By continuing to expand and modernize our electricity grid, we can deliver more of South Dakota's wind resource to high demand areas, just as we deliver other commodities like soybeans and corn to other parts of the nation.

Deuel Harvest North Wind Farm will support up to 400 jobs during construction and employ approximately 15 full-time operations and maintenance staff. As for economic development Deuel Harvest North Wind Farm will create more than \$8 million in landowner payments, property tax payments, local spending and local staff salaries every year. Over the life of the project over \$150 million will be invested directly in the community with benefits for local communities of increased tax base for townships within the project footprint, and the county. There will also be a \$30,000 per year scholarship to the direct benefit of the local students at Deuel School for assistance with their post secondary education. As I mentioned before, wind is a new form of agricultural production to keep farms in the family and provides a hedge against commodity prices and this project will provide the same opportunity for the Deuel County community.

Renewable power is proving its worth throughout the Great Plains, and South Dakota Farmers Union is committed to keeping our state open for more wind development and Deuel Harvest Wind North Farm should be one of them. The renewable energy sector is one of the fastest growing in the nation, and renewable energy will continue to play a crucial role in creating new jobs and growing our state's economy. South Dakota is more than capable of being a major part of this industry. As wind power has grown to be nearly a third of our energy production.

South Dakota Farmers Union works to promote the interests of farmers and ranchers and their families. We work hard to advance sound and beneficial agricultural policies. South Dakota Farmers Union formally supports the development of wind energy in the state and we support landowner's rights to develop their property.

Agriculture is the backbone of our rural communities so when the landowners, farmers and ranchers do well, so does the community. Over the years, many businesses and opportunities have left our small towns for larger metropolitan areas. Wind farms provide a unique opportunity to use our natural resources to bring opportunity and stability to farmers, ranchers, landowners, rural governments and the communities where they live and do business.

America is the greatest country in the world and the agricultural community has been a strong and supporting pillar of this country throughout its history. We honor that history by fighting every day for family farmers, ranchers and the rural way of life. We are proud to help the landowners and farmers of South Dakota so that they may continue to remain financially successful not only today but also in the future, and this will benefit the communities where they live.

South Dakota Farmers Union will continue to support wind projects like Deuel Harvest North Wind Farm and I encourage you, the PUC to as well.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this very important rural development and landowner rights project.

Respectfully yours,



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