

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION BY  
TATANKA RIDGE WIND, LLC FOR A PERMIT FOR A WIND ENERGY FACILITY  
IN DEUEL COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA, FOR TATANKA RIDGE WIND FARM**

**SD PUC DOCKET EL 19-026**

**PRE-FILED SUPPLEMENTAL DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JANELLE RIELAND,  
WESTERN ECOSYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY, INC.,  
ON BEHALF OF TATANKA RIDGE WIND, LLC**

September 11, 2019

1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

2

3 **Q. Please state your name, employer, and business address for the record.**

4 A. My name is Janelle Rieland. I am employed by Western EcoSystems Technology Inc.  
5 (“WEST”), and my business address is 7575 Golden Valley Road, Golden Valley,  
6 Minnesota 55427.

7

8 **Q. Did you previously submit direct testimony in this docket on June 17, 2019?**

9 A. Yes.

10

11 **II. PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY**

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13 **Q. What is the purpose of your supplemental direct testimony?**

14 A. The purpose of my supplemental direct testimony is to provide an update regarding the  
15 environmental surveys conducted by WEST for the Tatanka Ridge Wind Project  
16 (“Project”) and to clarify the timing and duration of proposed post-construction mortality  
17 monitoring.

18

19 **Q. What exhibits are attached to your supplemental direct testimony?**

20 A. The following exhibits are attached to my supplemental direct testimony:

- 21 • Exhibit 1: Grassland Assessment for the Tatanka Ridge Wind Project. Prepared  
22 for Tatanka Ridge Wind, LLC, Portland, Oregon. Prepared by SWCA  
23 Environmental Consultants, Bismarck, North Dakota. August 15, 2019.
- 24 • Exhibit 2: 2019 Survey Report Addendum to the Dakota Skipper (*Hesperia*  
25 *dacotae*) and Poweshiek Skipperling (*Oarisma poweshiek*) Survey Report (August  
26 2018) for the Tatanka Ridge Wind Project, Deuel County, South Dakota. Prepared  
27 for Tatanka Ridge Wind, LLC, Portland, Oregon. Prepared by SWCA  
28 Environmental Consultants, Bismarck, North Dakota. August 2019.

29

30 **III. SURVEY UPDATE**

31

32 **Q. Do you have any updates to your direct testimony regarding environmental surveys**  
33 **or studies that have been conducted for the Project?**

34 A. Yes. As described in Section 9.1.1.1 of the Application, an assessment was conducted to  
35 classify undisturbed grasslands within the Project as either Non-native Undisturbed  
36 Grasslands (grasslands that do not show evidence of prior disturbance, but are dominated  
37 by non-native species, invasive species, or monocultures) or Native Undisturbed  
38 Grasslands (grasslands that do not show evidence of prior disturbance and that contain  
39 native herbaceous [plants without woody stems] or grammanoid [grass-like] species).  
40 The results of the grassland assessment were incorporated into the Application filed with  
41 the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission on June 17, 2019, but the memo detailing  
42 the assessment had not been finalized at that time. The Grassland Assessment for the  
43 Tatanka Ridge Wind Project is attached as Exhibit 1.

44

45 As described in Section 9.2.1.4.1 of the Application, two butterflies in the skipper family  
46 (Hesperiidae) that are federally listed under the Endangered Species Act occur within  
47 specialized native prairie habitat that could be present within the Project. In order to  
48 determine whether potentially suitable habitat for these species is present within the  
49 Project, a desktop assessment and habitat surveys were conducted within the eastern  
50 portion of the Project in 2018 (the 2018 survey report is included as Appendix D of the  
51 Application) and within the western portion of the Project in 2019. The results of the  
52 surveys were incorporated into the Application filed with the South Dakota Public  
53 Utilities Commission on June 17, 2019, but the survey report had not been finalized at  
54 that time. The results of the desktop assessment and habitat surveys are attached as an  
55 addendum to the 2018 survey report, and is attached as Exhibit 2.

56

57 **Q. What were the results of the grassland assessment and 2019 skipper habitat**  
58 **surveys?**

59 A. The grassland assessment identified approximately 1,920 acres of grassland within the  
60 Project boundary (Exhibit 1). Of this, over 99% (approximately 1,906 acres) were  
61 classified as Non-native Undisturbed Grasslands, and less than 1% (approximately

62 14 acres) were classified as Native Undisturbed Grasslands. The native grasslands were  
63 dominated by little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and big bluestem (*Andropogon*  
64 *gerardii*), along with porcupine grass (*Hesperostipa spartea*) and western wheatgrass  
65 (*Pascopyrum smithii*). Prairie coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*) and purple coneflower  
66 (*Echinacea angustifolia*) were some of the few native forbs present.

67  
68 The desktop assessment identified 1,279.3 acres of potential skipper habitat within the  
69 2019 survey area (see map in Appendix A to Exhibit 2). Field surveys of the potential  
70 habitat were conducted from May 28 through June 2, 2019; no suitable habitat for the  
71 federally listed skippers was identified. Unsuitable habitat areas were primarily  
72 dominated by non-native upland species (e.g., smooth brome [*Bromus inermis*], clover  
73 [*Trifolium* spp.], orchardgrass [*Dactylis glomerata*], or timothy [*Phleum pratense*]), or  
74 were within a wetland that did not have requisite Dakota skipper or Poweshiek  
75 skipperling plant species. Because suitable habitat for the Dakota skipper or Poweshiek  
76 skipperling were not present within the 2019 survey area, species-specific occupancy  
77 surveys for these species were not completed.

78

#### 79 **IV. CLARIFICATION**

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##### 81 **Q. What is the proposed duration of post-construction fatality monitoring?**

82 A. Tatanka Ridge will conduct 12 months of post-construction fatality monitoring, which  
83 will begin when the Project begins operation. Because the Project is expected to begin  
84 operation in 2020, post-construction fatality monitoring to assess Project-related impacts  
85 to birds and bats will be conducted over 2 calendar years.

86

#### 87 **IV. CONCLUSION**

##### 88 **Q. Does this conclude your supplemental direct testimony?**

89 A. Yes.

90

91 Dated this 11th day of September, 2019.

92 /s/

93 Janelle Rieland, for TATANKA RIDGE WIND, LLC