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South Dakota

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September 22, 2022

Patricia Van Gerpen
Executive Director
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
Pierre, SD 57501

Ms. Van Gerpen,

RE: EL19-027 In the Matter of the Application by Crowned Ridge Wind II, LLC for a Permit of a Wind Energy Facility in Deuel, Grant, and Codington Counties

At the August 30, 2022, Commission meeting, the Commission asked for Staff's opinion regarding the objectivity of consultants hired by project owners that perform sound tests. Attached to this letter is a memorandum from Staff further explaining why it is Staff's opinion that properly credentialed and reputable consultants are objective even if they are contracted by the project owner. In addition, the memorandum includes a discussion on the cost of conducting sound tests and provides Hessler Associates, Inc.'s proposal for overseeing Xcel's upcoming sound test.

Staff asked Hessler Associates, Inc. to review the memorandum to see if Staff's thinking is misguided in anyway based on their years of experience in the field. One key point that Hessler Associates, Inc. emphasized was that the main reason a reputable consultant would not put a finger on the scale is that doing so would result in an instant loss of credibility within the very small world of acoustical consulting. They further stated that all business in the acoustical consulting field is driven by word of mouth, so a consultant is only as good as their reputation.

Sincerely,

Darren Kearney
Utility Analyst