



ENVIRONMENTAL & STATISTICAL CONSULTANTS

274 Discovery Drive, Suite 101, Unit 101, Bozeman, Montana 59718
Phone: 307-631-2581 ♦ www.west-inc.com

June 13, 2024

Natalie Gates
US Fish and Wildlife Service – South Dakota Ecological Services Field Office
420 S Garfield Ave., Suite 400
Pierre, SD 57501

Brian Pauly
US Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration – Upper Great Plains Regional Office
P.O. Box 35800
Billings, MT 59107

RE: North Bend Wind Project, South Dakota – Post-Construction Fatality Monitoring

Dear Ms. Gates and Mr. Pauly:

On behalf of ENGIE North America and North Bend Wind Project, LLC, Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. (WEST) is providing a summary of the May 9, 2024 discussion and justification for postponing post-construction monitoring (PCM) effort until 2025. The PCM effort was designed to target a 0.2 g-value for the federally endangered north long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) at the North Bend Wind Project (Project) in Hyde and Hughes counties, South Dakota.

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) has planned construction activities that will result in operational shutdowns for two weeks in 2024 (schedule unknown) and five weeks in September and early October 2024 with the potential to extend through November 2024.

Conducting PCM searches during active construction poses health and safety risks and introduces confounding variables that will impact study results. Specifically, construction activities will result in operational outages when the most bat fatality incidents at operational wind energy projects typically occur. To ensure the PCM study is conducted with statistical rigor and to attempt to obtain the targeted g-value for the northern long-eared bat, WEST will postpone the PCM study until 2025. All parties agreed that postponement would allow WEST to assess operational impacts to bats and birds more accurately, as a full fall season could be included in the study.

Thank you for your support on this Project and for your time to discuss this PCM effort.

Sincerely,

Cailene V. Bovee
Consulting Biologist /Project Manager