

From: Erica Kolden [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 25, 2025 8:00 AM
To: PUC-PUC <PUC@state.sd.us>
Subject: [EXT] Toronto Plant Project

Hi,

Thank you for coming to Toronto last night to hear the concerns of our community. My name is Erica Kolden. I live a half mile directly south of the proposed site location. At this time, my house is the closest home with small children and a growing family in proximity to the site. I grew up on a farm east of Toronto, went to college, and moved back here with my husband in 2018. I love this community, and like all small towns, the ties to the area run deeper than just a simple "I'm from here". Our land, homes and neighbors can't be replaced. It's not as simple as if you don't like what's coming, then move. That is not the solution.

I want it noted that I am very uneducated in the purpose, output and benefits of these facilities, but I still want to express my concerns. I believe it is in our nation's and public's best interest that advancements such as these are important and made. I am not arguing that. I understand that. But it's heartbreaking to think that it comes at the expense of our small town communities. As the majority of community members shared at the PUC meeting last night, it is detrimental to us.

Some of the concerns I have with yet another facility coming just a half mile north of me is the construction period, health concerns, and community concerns. I recall that during the construction for the Astoria plant a few years ago, there was also a lot of construction taking place for the windtower farms. Frustrating does not even begin to describe how that felt when that was taking place. I was just a young wife in my early 20s only worrying about myself. Now I have a 3 and 2 year old. I fear for those big trucks flying by minute after minute during the peak of construction time. I am outside with my children often as weather allows, and although I know by me saying this, there is probably no solution, but it is a fact that those speed limits are not being followed. It is massive trucks on a road with no shoulder, not abiding by the 55 mile an hour speed limit. It is valid for me to be concerned as a mother during the construction period.

My next concern is mainly driven by what if and fear, and I hope there will never be evidence regarding it, but it is 2025 and it is valid to have concerns about the environment that we live in. I am a young mom and very conscious of the low toxin environment I provide for my kids every day. My concern is for health. With facilities already around us and potentially

more to come, what does that truly mean for our community members? I think there is weight in saying that I am concerned for what 10, 20 or 40 years of living around “many” of these sites can do to us.

For my last point, I would just like to touch on community. I know the meeting last night was for the project specifically a half mile north of my house. But we know there is also discussion of the data center coming directly north of Astoria as well. Let’s say hypothetically both developments pass. It could be 2035 and if you were driving in Deuel County, but specifically around Toronto, Astoria and Brandt, you could make a loop and be mind blown by the three massive facilities with wind towers in every direction. I don’t think there would be one person out there that would drive that 5 mile radius loop and say “wow what a great community to live in”. I want to echo what was said last night by neighbors of mine saying that we feel like we are an industrial dumping ground.

I showed up to the meeting last night and the other open houses they have had at the elementary school gym. I believe in the process of passing these facilities with advancement in mind, but also with the feeling that voices of citizens can be heard. As a citizen who is not impressed with the facilities already around her, I am asking you to consider not passing this plant by Toronto. Show us that the community is actually being listened to and say no. Honestly, consider doing the project somewhere else. Do it somewhere that’s a little bit more remote. That’s not in between 2 very small towns less than 2 miles away. And also consider doing it on a piece of land where there isn’t multiple families in the same mile radius residing on acreages. I would assume the importance of our area continually being the land they seek is that pipeline. Consider putting it somewhere else in another county on the pipeline. I do not want to see another project impact our small community negatively.

Thank you, Gary, Chris, and Kristie for coming last night. I hope my words have some weight and meaning.

Erica Kolden

[REDACTED]

Toronto SD 57268