

From: PUC

Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2025 11:29 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: [EXT] SDCL 49-41B 17 and ARSD 20:10:22:40 and EL25-030 as found in Pioneer Review for dockets

Mr. & Mrs. Foland:

Thank you for sharing your comments with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission regarding Dockets [EL25-029](#) - *In the Matter of the Application by Philip Wind Partners, LLC, for Energy Facility Permits for a Wind Energy Facility and a 230 kV Transmission Facility in Haakon County, South Dakota (Philip Wind Project)* and [EL25-030](#) - *In the Matter of the Application by Basin Electric Power Cooperative for Energy Facility Permit for a 230 KV Transmission Facility In Haakon County, South Dakota*. Both dockets were filed with the Commission on August 15, 2025.

The Commission appreciates your engagement and recognizes the importance of the issues you have raised. You have expressed concerns regarding construction traffic in and around the proposed project area, as well as potential impacts on weather patterns, wildlife and noise pollution. Additionally, you have raised questions about decommissioning responsibilities and the implications for state government spending and operations.

I encourage you to refer to components of the application, accessible on the PUC's website, for information and proposed mitigation measures provided by Philip Wind Partners LLC, regarding many of your concerns. For example, in EL25-029, the application for the Philip Wind Project, page 2 of the [Application](#) states that the applicant has entered into a Road Use Agreement with Haakon County. Philip Wind Partners submitted their decommissioning plan as part of their application, which outlines the steps the company would follow if the facility were to be dismantled and the area restored. See [Appendix E - Decommissioning Plan](#). Further, codified laws [49-41B-35](#) and [49-41B-39](#) allow the Commission to require financial assurance from the project for decommissioning, which the Commission has historically required as a permit condition.

Several documents filed by Philip Wind Partners and posted in the EL25-029 docket address wildlife and avian impacts including:

[Appendix C - Environmental Commitments](#)

[Appendix J - Prairie Dog Colony Status and Mapping Report](#)

[Appendix K - Prairie Grouse Lek Survey Report](#)

[Appendix L - 2023–2024 Large Bird Use Survey Report](#)

[Appendix M - Raptor Nest Survey Report](#)

[Appendix N - Eagle Utilization Distribution Monitoring](#)

[Appendix O - Northern Long-Eared Bat Habitat Assessment](#)

[Appendix P - Whooping Crane Habitat Assessment](#)

[Appendix Q - Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy](#)

[Appendix R - Whooping Crane Monitoring and Contingency Plan](#)

While I point you to information included in the application, above, I assure you that the Commission and PUC staff will review the information, supporting studies, and proposed mitigation measures with a critical eye.

You have suggested that wind energy facilities use thousands of gallons of oil each month to operate. While it is accurate that wind turbines require oil and other fluids for lubrication and maintenance of internal mechanisms, it is important to understand these fluids are not used for fuel. Wind turbines generate electricity through the kinetic energy of the wind, not by burning oil or any other fossil fuel.

Your final comment suggests that South Dakota government should reduce spending and downsize. Please be assured that the PUC operates in a fiscally responsible and highly professional manner in the expenditure of financial and staff resources when processing all dockets. Under South Dakota law, applicants for wind energy and transmission facility permits are required to submit a filing fee to the Commission. These fees are used to cover the actual expenses incurred by the PUC in processing such dockets. Therefore, the cost of processing these matters is borne by the applicants, not by taxpayers. For reference, see

the Commission's orders in dockets EL25-029 and EL25-030, which include the Order Assessing Filing Fee; Order Authorizing Executive Director to Enter into Consulting Contracts.

The PUC's processing of these dockets has just begun. The PUC held a public input meeting in Philip on Oct. 2, 2025, at which the applicants presented information and residents offered comments for the Commission's consideration. As the process moves forward, additional information will be requested from the applicant, filed in the docket, and made publicly available. You may find the [Energy Conversion & Electric Transmission Facilities Siting Guide](#), accessible from the docket, helpful in understanding the Commission's review process.

Thank you, again, for reaching out with your comments. Your email and this response will be posted under Comments and Responses section of the online dockets.

Sincerely,

Gary Hanson

Chairman