

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Select Agency Correspondence**



ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

Sound Science. Creative Solutions.®

201 Slate Drive, Suite 8  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58503  
Tel 701.258.6622 Fax 701.258.5957  
www.swca.com

January 15, 2026

**VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Mandy Pearson  
Senior Wildlife Biologist  
Wildlife Diversity and Environmental Review  
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks  
4130 Adventure Trail  
Rapid City, South Dakota 57702  
*Sent via email to: [mandy.pearson@state.sd.us](mailto:mandy.pearson@state.sd.us)*

**Re: *Crowned Ridge I Battery Energy Storage System, Codington County, South Dakota***

To Mandy Pearson:

On behalf of Crowned Ridge Energy Storage I, LLC (CRES), a wholly owned, indirect subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC (NextEra Energy Resources), SWCA Environmental Consultants is writing to request your comments on the proposed 120-megawatt (MW) Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)(Project) located in Codington County, South Dakota (see attached Figure). The Project is proposed to be located within the existing Crowned Ridge I Wind Energy Facility project area, which is owned and operated by Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC.

The Project includes a 120-MW, 4-hour duration BESS facility with associated inverters, transformers, underground cables, and other ancillary facilities, such as fencing, roads, and a supervisory control and data acquisition system. The Project will connect to the existing Crowned Ridge Wind Collector Substation via an approximately 2,100-foot-long collection line. The Project Area encompasses approximately 60 acres of property for which CRES has executed a voluntary lease with purchase option agreement. CRES expects to start construction in June 2027 with commercial operation anticipated in May 2028. The Project's anticipated lifespan is 35 years.

The Project will be capable of storing excess power from the grid when production exceeds system demand (oversupply). If the grid has excess energy (e.g., during periods of low demand), this energy will be absorbed by the Project for later release. The Project will provide additional

reliability for and deliverability to the grid by having the ability to store low-cost, excess generation (relative to load) and inject it into the grid at times of increased demand.

The South Dakota Public Utility Commission has made a determination that it has jurisdiction over the Project. Therefore, in accordance with South Dakota Codified Law § 49-41B-11, CRES is preparing an application for a facility permit following the permitting process for an energy conversion facility described in South Dakota Administrative Rules (ARSD) 20:10:22.

To facilitate your review of the Project, we have enclosed a figure and corresponding shapefiles depicting the Project area. Project facilities will occupy only a portion of the Project area.

We appreciate and welcome any comments your agency may have regarding the Project and resources under your jurisdiction and respectfully ask for receipt of your comments by February 15. If you would like to request additional information or have questions regarding this matter, please contact me at (614) 580-6715 or [kely.wabnitz@swca.com](mailto:kely.wabnitz@swca.com).

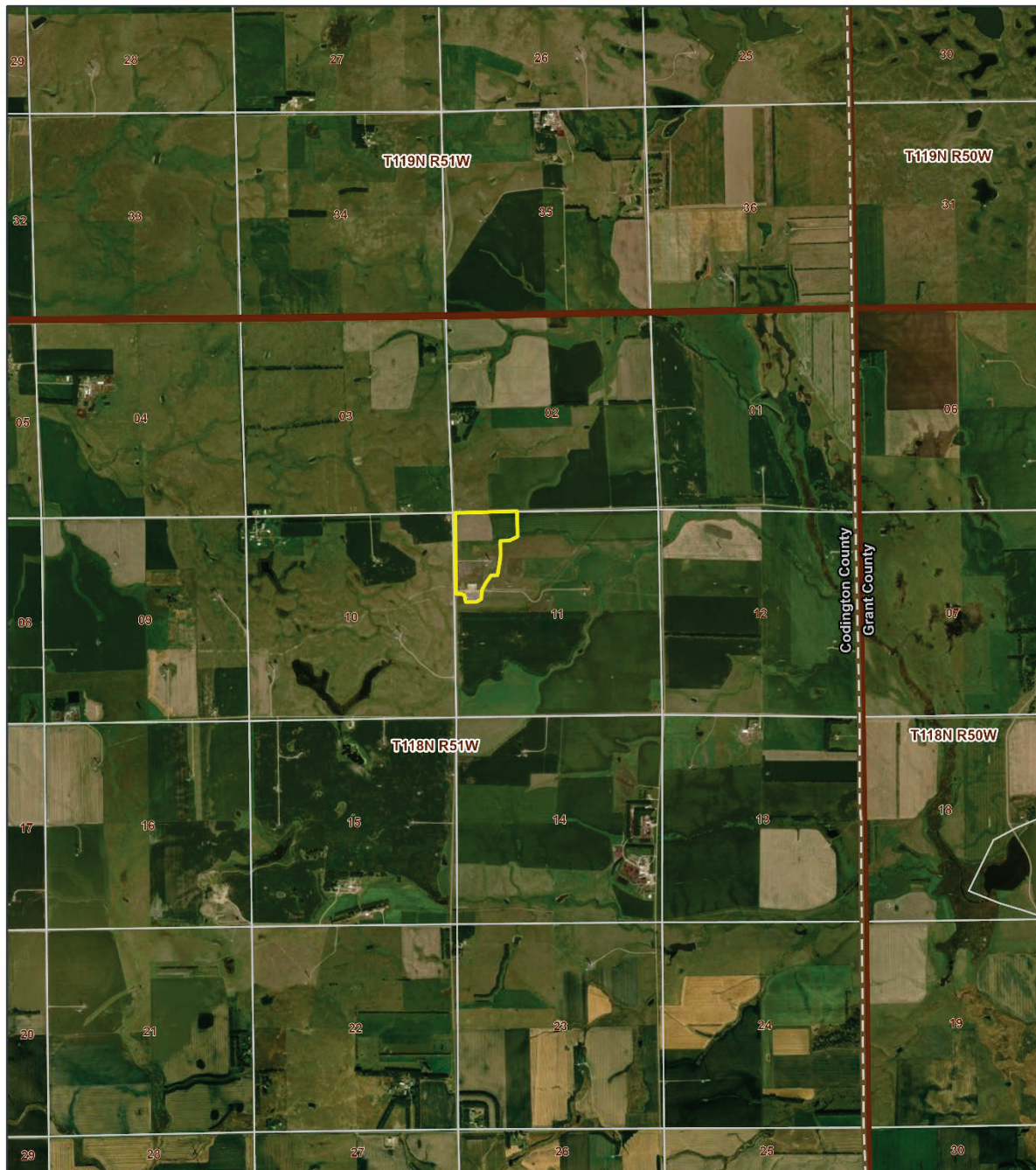
Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kely Wabnitz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kely Wabnitz  
Principal Project Management Team Lead, Rocky Mountain Plains

cc: Jill Seed, Nextera Energy Resources, LLC

**ATTACHMENT 1:  
PROJECT AREA FIGURE**



- Project Area
- Township/Range Boundary
- Section Boundary
- County Boundary

Codrington County, SD  
 USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:  
 South Shore, SD, 45096-A8  
 T118N R51W Sections 02,11  
 NAD 1983 UTM Zone 14N  
 45.0441°N 96.9158°W

Base Map: Esri ArcGIS Online,  
 accessed January 2026  
 Updated: 1/8/2026  
 Project No: 81714  
 Layout:  
 81714\_CrownedRidge\_BCR\_Chil\_PL  
 Aprx:  
 4\_crownedRidgeBatteryStorageProject

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**SWCA**  
 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS



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January 15, 2026

**VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY**

Luke Toso  
Acting Field Supervisor  
ND/SD Ecological Services  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
*Sent via email to: luke\_toso@fws.gov*

**Re: *Crowned Ridge I Battery Energy Storage System, Codington County, South Dakota***

To Luke Toso:

On behalf of Crowned Ridge Energy Storage I, LLC (CRES), a wholly owned, indirect subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC (NextEra Energy Resources), SWCA Environmental Consultants is writing to request your comments on the proposed 120-megawatt (MW) Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)(Project) located in Codington County, South Dakota (see attached Figure). The Project is proposed to be located within the existing Crowned Ridge I Wind Energy Facility project area, which is owned and operated by Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC.

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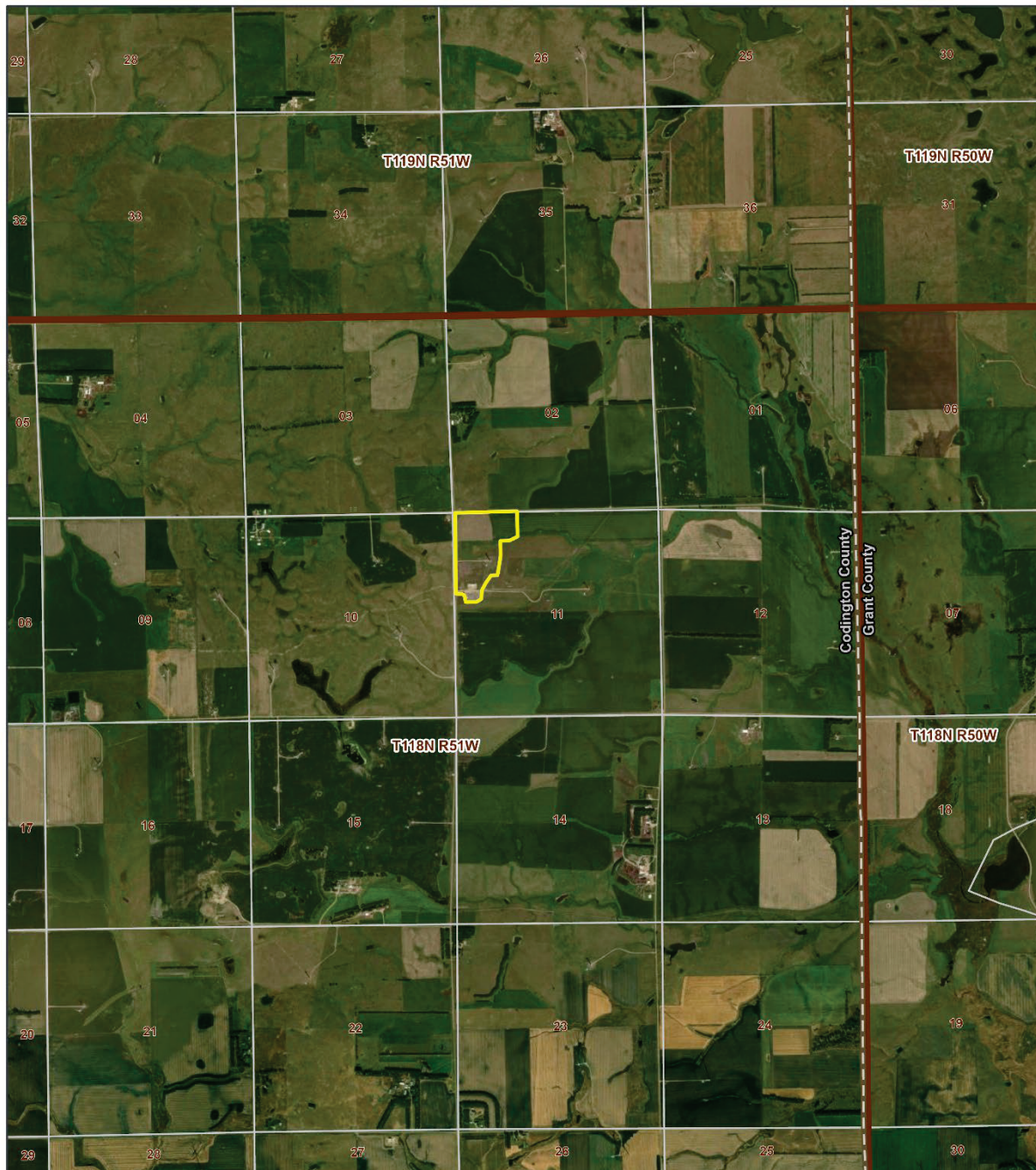
Respectfully,





A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kely Wabnitz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "K" and a distinct "W".

Kely Wabnitz  
Principal Project Management Team Lead, Rocky Mountain Plains

cc: Jill Seed, Nextera Energy Resources, LLC

**ATTACHMENT 1:  
PROJECT AREA FIGURE**



-  Project Area
-  Township/Range Boundary
-  Section Boundary
-  County Boundary

Codington County, SD  
 USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:  
 South Shore, SD, 45096-A8  
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 Layout:  
 81714\_CrownedRidge\_BCR\_Chil\_PL  
 Aprx:  
 4\_crownedRidgeBatteryStorageProject

**SWCA**  
 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

**From:** [Toso, Luke B](#)  
**To:** [Kely Wabnitz](#)  
**Cc:** [SouthDakotaFieldOffice, FW6](#); [Seed, Jill](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Crowned Ridge I Battery Energy Storage System Project  
**Date:** Thursday, January 15, 2026 9:35:21 AM  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-drnwz2hk.png](#)  
[CRI BESS Agency Outreach USFWS 2026Jan15.pdf](#)

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Hi Kely,

Thanks for reaching out with this request. In light of the [recent Department of the Interior memo](#), we cannot conduct any work on projects with a wind and solar nexus without further review and approval from the Department of the Interior. This includes attending meetings or providing technical assistance. However, guidance on this policy continues to evolve, and we would like to be included in meeting invites and information, but we may not be able to review, respond, or participate unless guidance changes. We recommend coordinating with state counterparts to ensure that native fish, wildlife, and plants are being addressed in any ongoing discussions.

We look forward to working with you on other projects, and appreciate your understanding.

Thank you,

Luke

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**Luke Toso**

Acting Field Supervisor  
ND/SD Ecological Services  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Text or Call: 720-793-6797



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**From:** Kely Wabnitz <Kely.Wabnitz@swca.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 15, 2026 7:23 AM  
**To:** Toso, Luke B <luke\_toso@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Seed, Jill <Jill.Seed@nexteraenergy.com>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Crowned Ridge I Battery Energy Storage System Project

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hi Luke,

Attached, please find a project overview of the proposed Crowned Ridge I Battery Energy Storage System Project in Codington County, South Dakota. We welcome any questions or comments you may have on the proposed project.

Thank you,  
Kely

**Kely Wabnitz**

Principal Project Management Team Lead, Rocky Mountain Plains

**SWCA Environmental Consultants**

☎ 614.580.6715

[kely.wabnitz@swca.com](mailto:kely.wabnitz@swca.com)



# SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS

523 EAST CAPITOL AVENUE | PIERRE, SD 57501

February 24, 2026

Kely Wabnitz  
SWCA Environmental Consultants  
201 Slate Drive, Suite 8  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58503

RE: Crowned Ridge I Battery Energy Storage System, Codington County, South Dakota

Dear Kely,

The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks has reviewed the proposed construction of a 120-megawatt (MW) Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project located in Codington County, South Dakota.

We conducted a search of the South Dakota Natural Heritage Database for the referenced project area. This database tracks species at risk, including those legally designated as rare, threatened, or endangered. No species were identified within the project area. However, because the project is located within core habitat for sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*), we ask that you remain vigilant for the presence of lek sites within the project boundaries. If a lek is located, please let me know as soon as possible.

Additionally, please adhere to strict fire prevention measures to minimize the risk of fire and potential contamination to surrounding lands.

Based on the information provided, and given that the proposed infrastructure will be constructed on previously disturbed lands, we do not anticipate significant impacts to fish and wildlife resources. If the project location or construction specifications change, please contact us for further review.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 605-394-6052.

Sincerely,

*Mandy Pearson*

Mandy Pearson  
Senior Wildlife Biologist  
4130 Adventure Trail  
Rapid City, SD 57702  
[mandy.pearson@state.sd.us](mailto:mandy.pearson@state.sd.us)

