

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA**

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION BY)
MERIDIAN WIND PROJECT, LLC FOR A)
PERMIT OF A WIND ENERGY FACILITY)
AND A 345-KV TRANSMISSION FACILITY IN)
HYDE COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA)

**ORDER ASSESSING FILING FEE;
ORDER AUTHORIZING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO
ENTER INTO CONSULTING
CONTRACTS**

EL20-013

On April 23, 2020, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) received an Application for a Facility Permit (Application) from Meridian Wind Project, LLC (Meridian or Applicant), a wholly-owned, indirect subsidiary of ENGIE North America, Inc. Meridian proposes to construct a wind energy conversion facility and an 8.9-mile, 345-kV transmission line to be located in Hyde County, South Dakota (Project). The Project would be situated within approximately 15,043-acres in the townships of Van Order, Eagle, Chapelle, Highmore, and Bramhall, South Dakota (Project Area). The total installed capacity of the Project would not exceed 175 megawatts (MW) of nameplate capacity. The proposed Project includes up to 64 wind turbine generators, access roads to turbines and associated facilities, underground 34.5-kilovolt (kV) electrical collector lines, underground fiber-optic cable, a 34.5-kV to 345-kV collection substation, and one permanent meteorological tower. The Project will interconnect to the high-voltage transmission grid via a 345- kV interconnection switch station (Chappelle Station) located at the western end of the Project’s transmission line. Chappelle Station is owned and operated by Basin Electric Power Cooperative and is under construction in conjunction with the Triple H Wind Project. The power produced by the Project will be injected at the Chappelle Creek Substation and into Basin Electric Power Cooperative’s existing electrical infrastructure. The Project, at the time of filing this application, has not executed a Power Purchase Agreement. The Project is expected to be completed in 2021. Applicant estimates the total cost of the Project to be \$220 million.

SDCL 49-41B-12 authorizes the Commission to assess a maximum fee not to exceed one-quarter of one percent for the first one hundred million dollars of estimated construction costs plus one-twentieth of one percent of all additional estimated construction costs of the Project, with a minimum total fee chargeable of not less than eight thousand dollars. The fee shall be deposited in a subfund in the Commission’s Regulatory Assessment Fee Fund to defray Commission expenses incident to analyzing and ruling upon the Application.

The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL Chapter 49-41B, specifically 49-41B-12, and ARSD Chapter 20:10:22.

At its regularly scheduled meeting on May 12, 2020, the Commission considered this matter. Commission staff requested that the Commission assess a filing fee not to exceed \$310,000 with an initial deposit of \$8,000, and to authorize the executive director to enter into consulting contracts needed for review of the Application. Meridian stated it did not object to the fee assessment. The Commission voted unanimously to assess Meridian a filing fee in an amount not to exceed \$310,000, with an initial deposit of \$8,000 to account for actual expenses incurred in review of this filing commencing from the filing date. The Commission further voted unanimously to authorize the executive director to enter into necessary consulting contracts. It is therefore

ORDERED, that Meridian shall be assessed a filing fee not to exceed \$310,000 with an initial deposit of \$8,000 and shall from time to time make such additional deposits up to the total amount of the assessment as requested by the Commission's finance manager. It is further

ORDERED, that the executive director is authorized to enter into necessary consulting contracts.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 15th day of May 2020.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE
The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, electronically.
By: <u>Adam deHueck</u>
Date: May 15, 2020
(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

Gary Hanson
GARY HANSON, Chairman

Chris Nelson
CHRIS NELSON, Commissioner

Kristie Fiegen
KRISTIE FIEGEN, Commissioner