



NEWS RELEASE
Sept. 3, 2014

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Commission Requires Bonds to Support Wind Farm Reclamation

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Public Service Commission (PSC) for the first time has required companies to post bonds to cover the cost of reclaiming a wind farm site to its original state when a facility is retired.

“It’s important that we develop all types of energy,” Commission Chairman Brian Kalk said. “It’s equally important that when the energy generation assets reach the end of their useful life, we ensure the land is reclaimed.”

North Dakota Century Code allows the Public Service Commission to decide whether a wind energy project that has been operating more than 10 years be required to file some form of financial assurance to cover the cost of decommissioning and restoration. This year four projects hit the ten-year mark triggering a review of their decommissioning plans.

"We reviewed this issue thoroughly and reached a good balance that protects the public and our landscape without creating significant new burdens or excessive costs on the companies," Commissioner Julie Fedorchak said. "These wind farms cover thousands of acres and leave a large footprint, so it's important to get this right."

She added that the Commission looked at requirements in other states as well as those imposed on the North Dakota coal industry for reclamation before arriving at the current decision.

In Sept. 2013, the Commission opened an investigation to determine the adequacy of decommissioning plans for the Edgeley I and II wind energy projects owned by FPL Energy North Dakota Wind I & II (subsidiaries of NextEra Energy, Inc.). During the investigation FPL Energy estimated a 35-year project life, after which the total cost of decommissioning and restoration of the sites is expected to be approximately \$2.23 million for the Edgeley I project and \$1.16 million for the Edgeley II project. Yesterday, the Commission approved an order that would require the company to obtain a corporate guaranty in the full estimated amounts for each project.

“In discussing coal mine reclamation in 1973, Gov. Art Link pointed out that only if the reclaimed land is as good or better than before will we be worthy of the rich heritage of our land and its resources,” Commissioner Randy Christmann said. “By setting a new precedent requiring financial assurances on these wind farms, we are again doing our best to make sure that the land will be as good or better for future generations.”

The North Dakota Public Service Commission is a constitutionally created state agency with authority to permit, site and regulate certain business activities in the state including electric and gas utilities,

telecommunications companies, power plants, electric transmission lines, pipelines, railroads, grain elevators, auctioneers, commercial weighing devices, pipeline safety and coal mine reclamation. For more information, contact the Public Service Commission at (701) 328-2400 or www.psc.nd.gov.

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