

September 30, 2008  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Scoping Meeting for Development of a Programmatic EIS

Comments Presented  
By the  
South Dakota Public Utilities Commission

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (SDPUC) both supports and encourages WAPA's and the Fish and Wildlife Service's proactive intent to more clearly define and hopefully streamline processes that allow us to develop new and cleaner sources of energy.

The timely siting, construction, and interconnection of new wind generation facilities is often dependent on public-interest reviews conducted by a number of federal and state agencies. If we find the operation of these new facilities to be in the public interest, which the SDPUC does, it stands to reason that more efficient processing of these reviews without sacrificing any quality of the review is also in the public interest.

We are intrigued by the possibilities of the successful development of your Programmatic EIS approach. It makes sense to us that moving from a case-by-case analysis to development of an accessible, pre-existing database for developers could result in tremendous efficiency and cost benefits for all, with additional potential benefit for the natural resources we all wish to protect. It appears to be a coherent response to increasing demands of the energy-using public, those interested in protecting our natural and human environmental resources, and the fast-developing wind generation industry. We applaud your effort.

Proposed transmission system enhancements are also to be considered with this process. It is no secret that South Dakota's exceptional wind resources will not be developed and will not reach a market until adequate transmission is constructed to reach those markets. While we are interested in efficiency improvements for existing transmission, we will need to go well-beyond existing capacity if we wish to reach our vast potential to power a significant portion of the United States' needs with clean, domestic wind generation. We will do whatever we can to support this development and strongly encourage a sense of urgency in consideration of this portion of the process.

We understand this is just the beginning of a process that may take up to two years to complete, and that many details have yet to be determined before completion. While we support the intent of the process, we do reserve the right to comment more fully when necessary program detail is proposed, and we look forward to doing what we can to assist a successful completion of your proposal.

Submitted by Gary Hanson