

Thank you for your comment, Roger Johnson.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is UGPW_S50004.

Comment Date: October 9, 2008 13:22:56PM
Upper Great Plains Wind PEIS
Comment ID: UGPW_S50004

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Attachment: WAPA-FWS.pdf

Comment Submitted:

[See Attachment.](#)

Roger Johnson
Agriculture Commissioner
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October 9, 2008

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WAPA/FWS Wind Energy
Programmatic EIS Scoping
Argonne National Laboratory
9700 S Cass Avenue EVS/900
Argonne, IL 60439

RE: Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to Evaluate Wind Energy Development

Dear WAPA/FWS:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the scope of the above referenced Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We recognize the volume of Upper Great Plains Region transmission system interconnection requests and support efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive region-wide management program for wind energy projects.

As you know, the world's best wind resources are located in North Dakota and the Upper Great Plains Region. I strongly support wind energy development as one of several essential steps toward gaining national energy independence. Wind energy is supported by the public and provides critical environmental benefits by reducing CO2 emissions and water consumption by the electrical generation sector. Proper wind development that engages farm and ranch landowners can also provide a new revenue source and alleviate pressures to break native grasslands and return Conservation Reserve Program acres to crop production. At the same time, I appreciate the need for a balanced approach to development and wildlife and other environmental concerns.

As stated in the Federal Register Notice: *"The objective of Western's proposed program would be to support the processing of these interconnection requests, including NEPA analyses, by having already addressed generic environmental interconnection concerns and issues in a Programmatic EIS."*

WAPA/FWS Wind Energy
October 9, 2008
Page Two

I support the stated objective provided the Programmatic EIS is developed and implemented to truly address *generic environmental interconnection concerns and issues*. As I see it, the challenge before you is to develop the EIS in a manner that helps streamline and expedite the processing of interconnection requests without excluding extensive areas of the region from development.

The Programmatic EIS must not incorporate broad-based restrictive regulations or determinations that unnecessarily delay or inhibit wind energy projects or exclude large areas of the region from development.

Rather, the Programmatic EIS should establish a reasonable and generic framework addressing development and environmental concerns that serves to efficiently expedite the development of wind energy projects to the greatest possible extent.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important undertaking. Timely and reasonable wind energy development is extremely important to North Dakota, the Upper Great Plains Region and the entire country.

Sincerely,



Roger Johnson
Commissioner

RJ:jk