

STEVE MURPHY

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Senate
State of Minnesota

February 15, 2010

Doctor David C. Boyd
Chair, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E., Suite 350
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

Dear Commissioner Boyd:

In the midst of debate about the construction and operation of Goodhue Wind, opponents of the project have spoken forcefully about the irrevocable change to their homes and lives that they claim to foresee. It's true that the wind farm will bring changes to Goodhue, but where some residents can only imagine the altered landscape, I see the multitude of benefits the project would bring to our community. As your political representative, I want to share some thoughts on why I support wind energy in general and in particular, the Goodhue Wind project.

I worked for Northern States Power for 28 years. Although I am now retired from the energy sector, my years of experience have left me familiar with Minnesota's particular energy features and needs. This project realizes those needs.

Goodhue Wind will bring economic strength to our community. This is a community-based project which separates itself from traditional, corporate energy developments in a few ways. One is that the majority of the economic benefits of the project remains in the hands and pockets of Goodhue County residents and MN based businesses. For farmers, contractors, and small businesses, this revenue is critical.

Several studies have established an empirical basis to describe the benefits of community wind projects. One study from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory states that a community wind project adds 0.4 to 1.6 jobs during construction per megawatt and 0.1 to 0.25 operations and maintenance jobs per megawatt during operation. For Goodhue Wind, that translates into 125 construction jobs and 10 long-term jobs. Again, these are locally held and retained jobs. Another study, conducted by the University of Minnesota – Morris, describes the economic advantages in even starker terms saying that community wind farms have 5 times the local economic benefits of corporate-owned wind farms and 3.4 times the local job creation.

Goodhue County also stands to gain from the increased tax revenues that will come with Goodhue Wind. Wind farms larger than 12 megawatts are taxed at a rate of \$.0012 per kilowatt hour.

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This tax is paid for by the developer. Goodhue is a 78 megawatt project and at calculated wind speeds, it will generate over 260,000,000 kilowatt hours per year. That means that every year, Goodhue County and the local townships will receive over \$300,000 of new tax revenues.

Goodhue Wind doesn't only address community-level issues—it's part of the bigger picture as well. The State of Minnesota enacted a Renewable Portfolio Standard in 2007 to help bring clean, renewable energy alternatives to the state—enough so that 25% percent of Minnesota's energy comes from renewable sources by 2025. In our state, the most viable form of renewable energy is wind, so as we strive to reach this goal, progress will often come in the form of new wind installations. Goodhue is situated in a particularly wind-rich section of the state and would serve as an valuable contribution toward Minnesota's energy goals.

Goodhue Wind is blessed with unique qualities that set it apart from other wind projects in the community and the state. Where other wind farms have to construct high voltage transmission in order to connect to the grid, Goodhue Wind is able to deliver power without new high voltage lines. Where other energy projects are built with little-to-no local involvement, Goodhue Wind has engaged the community at each turn. Community members have an ownership stake in the project with an advisory role by a board of local residents. Finally, Goodhue Wind has agreed to voluntarily setback its turbines 1500 feet from non-participating dwellings. This is twice the setback distance enacted by many wind farms, and is an apt example of the many ways in which the project has worked with the community to find solutions that address local concerns.

I greatly appreciate the huge benefits that Goodhue Wind will bring to our community: improving the environment, creating jobs, enhancing agriculture, energy policy and economic development. These are issues that I have dedicated myself to in the Minnesota Senate.

This is an important project for the state and for the community, and it fulfills the promise of providing a better future for our children. These turbines will be a marker, a monument that we can leave behind as proof that we took the necessary steps to secure an improved tomorrow. I wholeheartedly endorse Goodhue Wind and ask that you do as well.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Murphy', written in a cursive style.

Senator Steve Murphy, District 28

Cc: Burl Haar, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, for distribution