

Troy Coons  
Northwest Landowners Association  
Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Testimony for SB 2263  
March 4, 2021



Good morning Chairman Porter and members of the committee, thank you for taking my testimony into consideration today. My name is Troy Coons and I am the Chairman of the Northwest Landowners Association. Northwest Landowners Association represents over 560 farmers, ranchers, and property owners in North Dakota. Northwest Landowners Association is a nonprofit organization, and I am not a paid lobbyist.

NWLA requests a “do pass” recommendation on SB 2263 and we are in favor of the proposed amendments. Landowners are the hosts for most of the energy infrastructure cited by the PSC, whether it is a pipeline or a wind farm. Our organization is not and has never been opposed to energy development. Our goal is to work with the industry to find ways to conduct energy development in a responsible manner. One of ways to make sure that happens is to make sure that everyone is at the table when a landowner’s property is being discussed.

In our experience, many landowners are not aware of how the PSC’s siting proceedings affect their land and their rights. The mission of NWLA starts with education, and we work with members to help them better understand their rights, and how the PSC siting authority can affect them and their land. One important step in this education process is making sure that the landowners whose property is subject to the PSC citing proceedings are aware of the proceeding. This amendment simply requires that applicants for a siting permit from the PSC must send notice to the property owner of record for any property in the application. We have spoken to some of the folks with industry, and our understanding is that they are generally in favor of this bill. The WIND group approached us with some proposed friendly amendments, and we agree with those amendments and the additional direction and clarity they provide.

It is critical that landowners are given notice of government decisions that affect their land. As the law stands now, no such notice of siting proceedings is given to the landowners impacted by the project most. We are simply asking to make sure those landowners are given notice so they have an opportunity to voice any concerns they might have, and for the PSC to get some of their local knowledge of the land with respect to facilities it is sitting on their land.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Troy Coons".

Troy Coons, Chairman  
Northwest Landowners Association