



ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSMISSION COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 26, 2026
Betty Hagel Memorial Civic Center, 312 Lincoln Avenue
Center, North Dakota

Representative Anna S. Novak, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Anna S. Novak, Dick Anderson, Mike Brandenburg, Austin Foss,* Pat D. Heinert, Dustin McNally, Todd Porter; Senators Brad Bekkedahl,* Ryan Braunberger, Mark Enget, Kathy Hogan, Greg Kessel, Desiree van Oosting, Kent Weston*

Members absent: Representative Alisa Mitskog; Senator Keith Boehm

Others present: Representative Bill Tveit, Hazen; Senator Dale Patten, Watford City Moones Alamooti, University of North Dakota; Levi Andrist, GA Group; Michael Berg and Joshua Dukart, Oliver County; Dave Berger, Oliver County Board of Commissioners; Tom Bodine, Department of Agriculture; Clay Cameron and Henry Rubin, NextEra Energy Resources; Steve Cottingham, McLean County Commission; Jessica Eagle-Bluestone, Geothermal Rising; Tom Giltner and Danette Welsh, ONEOK, Inc.; Tyler Hamman, Energy and Environmental Research Center; Joe Hoppe, Otter Tail Power Company; Paul Jensen, Cass County; Brant Johnson, Grid United; Mike Murray, Basin Electric Power Cooperative; Matt Perdue, North Dakota Farmers Union

**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Representative Porter, seconded by Senator Kessel, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the November 6, 2025, meeting be approved as distributed.

Mr. Dave Berger, Vice Chairman, Oliver County Board of Commissioners, welcomed the committee to Center.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ENERGY POLICY

North Dakota Farmers Union

Mr. Matt Perdue, President, North Dakota Farmers Union, presented information regarding the role and experience of the North Dakota Farmers Union in development projects involving landowners. He noted successful projects emphasize early, direct communication to ensure alignment with local zoning requirements and community needs.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. Perdue noted the North Dakota Farmers Union will continue its discussions on local authority as a means of addressing local issues caused by state government projects. He noted the best solutions will come from local communities.

Department of Agriculture

Mr. Tom Bodine, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Agriculture, presented information regarding the department's ombudsman programs. He noted the Royalty Oversight Program, the Wind Energy Restoration and Reclamation Oversight Program, and the Pipeline Restoration and Reclamation Oversight Program provide neutral, third-party support to mineral owners and landowners to assist in resolving disputes.

Grid United

Mr. Brant Johnson, Senior Vice President, Development, Grid United, presented information ([Appendix A](#)) regarding the role and experience of Grid United in development projects involving landowners, including public outreach, public comment processes, and considerations of landowner rights. He noted public outreach begins with counties and townships, followed by engagement with landowners to establish an agreed-upon route.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. Johnson noted project routes should be collocated within existing easement corridors if space permits.

ONEOK, Inc.

Ms. Danette Welsh, Director, Government Relations, and Mr. Tom Giltner, Senior Manager, Real Estate Services, ONEOK, Inc., presented information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding the role and experience of ONEOK, Inc., in development projects involving landowners, including public outreach, public comment processes, and consideration of landowner rights.

In response to a question from a committee member, Ms. Welsh noted consistency in local zoning regulations is important to the construction of linear infrastructure projects within the state.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative

Mr. Mike Murray, Director, Property and Right of Way, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, presented information ([Appendix C](#)) regarding the role and experience of Basin Electric Power Cooperative in development projects involving landowners, including public outreach, public comment processes, and considerations of landowner rights.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Murray noted:

- The reclamation timeline is dependent on the scope and duration of the project.
- Project reclamation in North Dakota pauses during the winter months.
- Once reclamation is complete, a document of approval is signed by the landowners indicating each landowner has received compensation for damages up to the date of approval.

Otter Tail Power Company

Mr. Joe Hoppe, Manager, Legislative Affairs, Otter Tail Power Company, presented information ([Appendix D](#)) regarding an update on the Abercrombie Solar project.

Wind Industry of North Dakota

Mr. Levi Andrist, Attorney, GA Group, representing Wind Industry of North Dakota, presented information ([Appendix E](#)) regarding an overview of the wind industry in North Dakota.

McLean County

Mr. Steve Cottingham, Vice-Chairperson, McLean County Commission, presented information regarding local ordinances, early engagement in project development, and the benefits of appropriate industrial siting. He noted McLean County relies on zoning to balance opportunities with thoughtful, deliberate stewardship of its land and community. He also noted growth is essential to the county's long-term survival.

NextEra Energy Resources

Mr. Clay Cameron, Executive Director, Development, and Mr. Henry Rubin, Director, Regulatory and Political Affairs, NextEra Energy Resources, presented information ([Appendix F](#)) regarding an overview of the siting process at NextEra Energy Resources.

Comments from Interested Persons

Mr. Michael Berg, Oliver County, presented information regarding his concerns about the purchase of land and the development of energy-related projects without notice or communication within the community.

Mr. Joshua Dukart, Oliver County, presented information regarding both positive and negative experiences with energy companies regarding compensation for damages caused by local energy projects.

GEOHERMAL ENERGY STUDY

Mr. Austin Gunderson, Counsel, Legislative Council, presented a background memorandum entitled [Geothermal Energy Study - Background Memorandum](#).

Geothermal Rising

Ms. Jessica Eagle-Bluestone, Tribal Community Engagement Manager, Geothermal Rising, presented information ([Appendix G](#)) regarding geothermal energy in the state.

In response to a question from a committee member, Ms. Eagle-Bluestone noted most states treat geothermal energy resources as a property right belonging to the surface owner, whereas on federal land geothermal energy is classified as a mineral resource with compensation paid to the mineral owner.

Energy and Environmental Research Center

Mr. Tyler Hamman, Assistant Vice President for Strategic Partnerships, Energy and Environmental Research Center, presented information ([Appendix H](#)) regarding the feasibility of generating power from geothermal resources in the state.

In response to a question from a committee member, Mr. Hamman noted geothermal energy has not expanded in North Dakota due to the high costs of drilling wells and the greater feasibility of using those wells for oil extraction compared to geothermal energy production.

University of North Dakota

Dr. Moones Alamooti, Teaching Assistant Professor, Energy and Petroleum Engineering, University of North Dakota, presented information ([Appendix I](#)) regarding the state's geothermal geology, repurposing nonproductive oil and gas wells, and opportunities for economic growth and innovation.

Comments from Interested Persons

Mr. Paul Jensen, Cass County, presented information regarding the importance of pursuing geothermal energy in the state.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Committee members expressed interest in receiving additional information regarding the regulatory framework on geothermal energy production in the state.

It was moved by Senator Hogan, seconded by Representative Anderson, and carried on a voice vote that the committee request the Energy and Environmental Research Center, the University of North Dakota Energy and Petroleum Engineering Department, and Geothermal Rising work together to provide the committee with a plan to leverage federal funding and other partnerships to support a comprehensive study on geothermal energy to include a pilot demonstration project and regulatory framework to promote geothermal energy within the state.

No further business appearing, Chairman Novak adjourned the meeting at 3:42 p.m.

Austin Gunderson
Counsel

ATTACH:9