

HB 1095
Jean Schafer - Basin Electric Power Cooperative, January 14, 2021
House Energy and Natural Resources

Chairman Porter and members of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

Basin Electric Power Cooperative (**Basin Electric**) is a regional, consumer-owned, generation and transmission cooperative formed in 1961 to supply supplemental power to a consortium of rural electric distribution cooperatives. Basin Electric's core business is generating and delivering electricity to wholesale customers, primarily our member systems. As of the end of 2020, Basin Electric owns 4,208 megawatts (**MW**) and operates 5,189 MW of electric generating capacity including coal, wind, natural gas, and nuclear. Basin Electric supplies 140 rural electric member cooperative systems with wholesale electric power who in turn serve approximately 3 million consumers in a nine-state area.

We would like to submit testimony in support of HB 1095 from the Public Service Commission, specifically Section 3, although we have no issues with Sections 1 and 2 contained in this bill.

Section 3 of this bill would allow the Public Service Commission (PSC) the option to provide a waiver, as opposed to only an extension, to the PrairieWinds ND 1 project owned by Basin Electric located south of Minot. This project went online in late 2009 and consists of 77 turbines that generate approximately 120 MW of wind energy.

Further complicating the FAA approval process for light mitigation at PrairieWinds ND 1 is the fact that the project surrounds a ballistic missile base that includes a helicopter pad, and is within close proximity to the Minot Air Force Base, therefore changing the lighting system on this project also requires approval from the U.S. Air Force. (USAF)

In recent months our communications with the USAF Global Strike Command, 20th Air Force, indicate that they will deny our request for light mitigation at the site due to security and flight safety concerns. Therefore, if the USAF won't allow the technology, it won't receive approval from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Basin Electric could perpetually file for extensions on the light mitigation requirement, but it would be more efficient for industry and the state if the PSC would have the option to provide a waiver due to the lack of USAF and FAA approval due to the location of this project.

Safety is our number one priority for all of our facilities, and we are highly supportive and respect the guidance of the USAF on this issue.