

1 Chairman Curt Kreun & members of the committee, my name is Scott Skokos and I am
2 testifying on behalf of Dakota Resource Council and our members. Thank you for allowing me
3 to submit written testimony in opposition of SB 2313.

4 Dakota Resource Council (DRC) is a non-partisan grassroots group of landowners, ranchers,
5 farmers, and other citizens. A key part of our mission is to promote the sustainable use of North
6 Dakota's natural resources.

7 DRC stands in opposition to SB 2313 because in our view it creates an unnecessary regulatory
8 burden on renewable energy sources, which could prevent future investment in North Dakota. In
9 addition, we also oppose SB 2313 because it is our view that firming and grid reliability should
10 be managed by the Independent System Operator that North Dakota is a part of, the
11 Midcontinent Independent Operating System (MISO). This bill, in our view, will do nothing to
12 make energy more reliable in North Dakota (because MISO already works at a regional level to
13 ensure grid reliability), rather it will push wind and solar investment out of state. North Dakota
14 will lose out on the tax dollars generated by new wind and solar developments. SB 2313 will also
15 make electricity more expensive for ratepayers which is not what anyone wants.

16 You will likely hear in testimony today that the blackouts in Texas provide evidence to support
17 SB 2313. First, we do not recommend North Dakota make long-term policy decisions based on
18 current events that have yet to be fully understood. An autopsy of the blackouts in Texas will be
19 completed in the near future so that we can better address the issues that led to this point. Lies
20 and misinformation around the blackouts happening in Texas are being used to manipulate and
21 push forward an agenda by special interest groups to damage the reputation of the renewable
22 energy industries. However, since the blackouts in Texas over the last week are being used to
23 support coal bills, we would like to set the record as straight as we can with the information that
24 is available currently.

25 On page 2, lines 1-3 it defines "'Resilience" means the ability to withstand and reduce the
26 magnitude or duration of events disruptive to electric supply, including the capability to
27 anticipate, absorb, adapt to, or rapidly recover from such an event.'" Many people are suggesting
28 that wind makes the grid less resilient, when in fact, all types of energy are impacted by
29 disruptive events. Coal and natural gas plants are not working in Texas due to record low
30 temperatures. Those record low temps and winter storms are caused by climate change.
31 Therefore, we encourage you to oppose SB 2313 because it is focusing on the wrong enemy. The
32 enemy is not renewable energy, it is climate change. We need to put our energy towards finding
33 new ways to use energy that reduces the amount of carbon we are putting into the atmosphere
34 that is disrupting the natural biological, chemical, and physical cycles of our planet. Carbon
35 sequestration is often touted as the solution and savior to these problems even as there has not
36 been an economically feasible project anywhere in the world.¹ In addition, several recent reports

¹ http://www.worc.org/media/Too_Good_to_Be_True_Report.pdf

37 have highlighted the investor risks and problems with Project Tundra.² Fossil fuel representatives
38 also like to blame the blackouts in California on renewables as well, when in fact it was partly
39 due to the increase of fires and due to the demand of electricity exceeding supply. The increase
40 of fires is, not surprisingly, also due to climate change.³

41 Take for instance the quote from Texas Governor Greg Abbott on the current situation with the
42 Texas grid, “The Texas power grid has not been compromised. The ability of some companies
43 that generate the power has been frozen. This includes the natural gas & coal generators. They
44 are working to get generation back on line. ERCOT & PUC are prioritizing residential
45 consumers.”⁴

46
47 Creating a reliability standard and penalizing wind and solar for not meeting that standard is not
48 going to address the resiliency problem. Our infrastructure and the way that the grids are being
49 managed are the real issue. Severe weather events are only going to increase in frequency as we
50 begin to see the effects from climate change.

51 Finally, manipulating the markets for one industry is not a free market policy. We understand
52 that energy markets are not a “pure free market”, but that also means that they never have been
53 truly free. Pure free markets are rare. All forms of energy have been heavily subsidized by the
54 federal government for decades. Supporters of this bill will reference a “distorted” market. In our
55 view, the energy market is not distorted because the energy market has always been influenced
56 by government subsidies and through laws. The need to address man-made climate change has
57 caused many parts of the country to experience a change in their consumer preferences, which
58 has naturally led to new laws, policies, and incentives at various levels of government.
59 Addressing climate change is crucial; doing so without unnecessarily raising the cost of
60 electricity is obviously preferable for the residents of North Dakota. This bill supports projects
61 that will, without a doubt, raise costs. Using federal tax credits to subsidize unnecessary
62 electricity costs of electricity used by residents of North Dakota and Minnesota is unfair to both
63 North Dakotans and the residents of the rest of the United States.

64 I urge the committee to oppose SB 2313 because creating a reliability standard that penalizes
65 wind will not address the grid resiliency problem and as a result, we recommend a **DO NOT**
66 **PASS** on SB 2313.

² https://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Project-Tundra_A-Step-in-the-Wrong-Direction_September-2020.pdf; https://ieefa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Petra-Nova-Mothballing-Post-Mortem_August-2020.pdf

³ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/08/why-renewables-arent-reason-california-blackouts/>

⁴ https://twitter.com/GregAbbott_TX/status/1361398774216744967