



Emergency Management  
Fire Service Administration

Reno County  
206 W 1<sup>st</sup> Ave  
Hutchinson, KS 67501  
620-694-2974

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March 18, 2018

Mark Vonachen  
Reno County Planner  
600 Scott Blvd  
South Hutchinson, KS 67505

Mark,

I have reviewed the package on a conditional use permit application for Pretty Prairie Wind submitted by NextEra Energy Resources, LLC. The request is to construct a wind energy conversion facility which will include a total of eighty one wind turbine sites and four alternate turbine sites, totaling 220 megawatts. The project plan includes approximately 170 participating landowners and approximately 20 miles of new access roads.

After reviewing this package for a conditional use permit, I spoke with the surrounding fire departments, Haven EMS, Hutchinson/Reno County Emergency Communications, Reno County EMS, NextEra Energy, and Pratt County Emergency Management.

The fire departments with jurisdiction in this project are Reno County Fire District 9 and Reno/Kingman Joint Fire District 1. These departments have two concerns. The first concern is that neither department has a high angle rescue team and would not be able to respond to the top of the turbines. The other concern is the VHF paging system that they are currently using to be notified of a call for service. There has been some speculation that if the wind turbines are between the VHF repeater and the receiving pager, the signal may be blocked, causing 911 calls to be missed.

Haven EMS Director Tony Troyer's only concern was also with communications. Haven EMS relies on a UHF paging system to notify them a call for service. Again, there has been some speculation that if the wind turbines are between the UHF repeater and receiving pager, the signal may be blocked, causing 911 calls to be missed.



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Next I spoke to the Hutchinson/Reno County Emergency Communications Director, Michele Abbott. She sent an email to several 911 Department Directors who have wind farms in their jurisdiction. The only impact that was noted is that an access road was built to each turbine. In turn, each turbine was assigned an address and that information had to be added to their geographic information system (GIS) and the Master Street Address Guide (MSAG). When I asked her about any communication concerns, she contacted Mark Graber of TBS Electronics.

TBS Electronics has a maintenance contract with the City of Hutchinson and Reno County for technical assistance, diagnosis and repair of the communication equipment across the county. Mark stated that he was unable to find any documentation that specifically addressed wind turbine interference. A Radio-Frequency Engineer from a national engineering firm confirmed that there can be interference but was unable to provide any documentation. Any interference by wind turbines would have to be looked at on a case to case basis.

Reno County EMS Deputy Chief David Trotter did not have any concerns. I asked them about LifeSave and EagleMed helicopters and if they would be able to land around the wind turbines. He was unsure if they would be able to land in the area but stated he would contact them and ask. Deputy Chief Trotter did mention that they are taking more patients by ambulance. Depending on the situation, a flight can take longer to get to the hospital than a ground unit. Deputy Chief Trotter contacted the helicopter services and they stated that they will land within a wind farm, provided the turbines are far enough apart. Usually the turbines do not cause any problems and they have trained for this.

After speaking to the responders throughout the county, I spoke to NextEra Representative Mark Trumbauer to address these concerns. Mark stated that NextEra does not require any sort of high angle rescue from Reno County. In the event of an emergency, NextEra has a full high angle rescue team that will be staged on Victory Road. If someone had an emergency inside or on top of a turbine, they would be sent to the emergency, assist the person down, and meet the first responders at the base of the turbine. Reno County emergency responders would not be required to enter or climb a turbine for any reason. Mark has never heard any complaints about radio interference or communication issues caused by the turbines. If the turbines are installed and there are communications issues, NextEra will mitigate those problems. NextEra will also provide their standard operating procedures and work with local fire departments on training.

Since there is a NextEra wind farm in Pratt County, I called and spoke to Pratt County Emergency Manager, Tim Branscom. Tim stated that NextEra has been really easy to work with and they have not had any communication issues due to the wind farms. When I asked about



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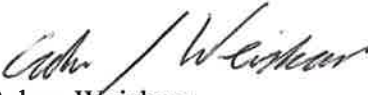
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medical helicopters, Tim stated that the turbines are 2500 feet apart in Pratt County. The medical helicopters do not have any issues landing in the area.

Please make note that there are several underground pipelines through the area.

After review of this application, I find nothing in my area that would preclude this application from being approved.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

  
Adam Weishaar  
Director