



wind on the wires™

Bringing Wind Power to Market

**Western Area Power Administration
Dakotas Wind Transmission Study
Public Information Forum
June 15, 2004, 7-9 p.m. CDT
Pierre, South Dakota**

**Comments of Wind on the Wires
Beth Soholt, Director**

Wind on the Wires is an organization based on St. Paul, Minnesota. Wind on the Wires has worked for the past 3 years on wind power and transmission issues in the Upper Midwest. Wind on the Wires' footprint is North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. Wind on the Wires has worked side-by-side with utility transmission planners, Mid-Continent Area Power Pool (MAPP) staff, and Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) staff on wind power and transmission issues, particularly on transmission expansion planning for the region. Wind on the Wires has also worked closely on regulatory issues at the state, regional and federal levels as the use of the transmission system continues to evolve and change.

Wind on the Wires gives Western high marks on the scope they have crafted and published in the Federal Register. Both the Objectives and the 4 Tasks Western has laid out are excellent and should lead to a meaningful study that actually aids in, and leads to, the development of significant amounts of new wind power and associated transmission.

The point I want to focus on this evening is the study process. Western has done an excellent job on the Study Scope. The study process must be equally as excellent. The study must be done in the light of day and in an open and inclusive manner. The study process should utilize a technical review committee – a stakeholder group of technical folks that convene for review and check-in at key points during the study process. A technical review committee is a common practice in the MAPP/MISO region and yields robust, peer-reviewed results that are more readily accepted by utilities, regulators, and other stakeholders at the end of the process.

Wind on the Wires urges the Western team to identify key stakeholders in this study process and invite them to participate in a technical review committee process. This study is being generously funded by Federal dollars and the public expects to participate all through the process, not just see the results at the end of the study process. Even given the process Western needs to follow as a Federal Agency, I believe Western can craft the process to include a technical review committee.

The technical review committee needs to be involved during the study process and have substantive input, not just review a finished product. The study is the responsibility of Western and questions about the process, outcome, and next steps will ultimately be Western's to answer. Wind on the Wires believes Western has a wonderful start on the study process and we look for the good work to continue.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for Wind on the Wires to enter these comments into the record.