



◇ January 8, 2013

Kelly Fuller  
American Bird Conservancy  
1731 Connecticut Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20009

Re: **Environmental Assessment**  
**Merricourt Wind Power Project**  
**Dickey and McIntosh Counties, North Dakota**

Dear Ms. Fuller:

The US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) to examine potential effects to the human environment, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) from the issuance of a federal permit to "take" threatened and endangered species. KLJ is preparing the EA on behalf of the USFWS. EDF Renewable Energy is preparing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) as part of the incidental take permitting process under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act for the Merricourt Wind Power Project. The federal action under consideration includes issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP) due to the potential for take of piping plovers, a threatened species, and whooping cranes, an endangered species, through the construction and operation of the proposed 150 megawatt Merricourt Wind Power Project located in Dickey and McIntosh Counties, North Dakota. ***Please refer to the enclosed project location map.*** Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), take of threatened or endangered species is defined as: to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct. Harm is further defined by USFWS to include significant habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury to listed species by significantly impairing behavioral patterns such as breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Harass is defined by USFWS as actions that create the likelihood of injury to listed species to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavior patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding or sheltering.

The proposed wind energy project is located within a 22,457-acre Project Area and would consist of approximately 100, 1.6-3.0 megawatt wind turbines to convert wind energy into approximately 150 megawatts of electric power. The project would also include about 33 miles of 16-foot-wide, gravel access roads between the wind turbines; approximately 47 miles of underground electrical collector cables; 3 permanent metrological towers; and a temporary laydown area. The electric power would be interconnected into Montana Dakota Utility's (MDU) existing Wishek to Ellendale 230kV transmission line. The interconnection would require a new substation and related transmission system upgrades. The environmental impacts of these facilities will be considered in the development of the EA, but are the responsibility of MDU and will be permitted and constructed separately from this project. It is not expected that additional overhead transmission line(s) will be required for the project.



Construction of the project is anticipated to begin in 2013.

We are soliciting your comments on the proposed wind energy project, including potential effects to threatened and endangered species, to ensure that the social, economic, and environmental effects are adequately considered in the EA. We would also appreciate any information on any future development(s) that are reasonably certain to occur in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Please provide your comments by February 7, 2013. All responses received by this date will be considered in the development of the EA. Responses can be sent to my attention at the address shown in the margin of this letter or via email at [jennifer.turnbow@kljeng.com](mailto:jennifer.turnbow@kljeng.com).

If you have any questions or need further information on the project or on this request, please call me at (701) 355-8468. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,  
KLJ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Turnbow', written in a cursive style.

**Jennifer Turnbow, Project Manager**

Enclosures (Map)