

Minnesota Farmers Union

Comments by Tim Henning
President, Nobles County Farmers Union
To the
Minnesota Legislative Electric Energy Task Force
December 9th, 2004

Chairman Metzen, Chairman Hackbarth, members of the committee, my name is Tim Henning and I am a livestock and grain farmer near Adrian, Minnesota in Nobles County. I also serve as President of the Nobles County Farmers Union.

Speaking on behalf of the Minnesota Farmers Union as well as the farmers of Nobles County, we are very supportive of wind and other renewable energy projects, these transmission lines are very important to rural development in Southwest Minnesota and many of our members are directly involved in the development of many of these exciting projects.

Today I would like to raise a concern that I am hearing from a number of farmers and landowners in my area. The issue is proper compensation for the acquiring of property easements for transmission lines to the proposed projects.

In general, landowners are offered a onetime payment for the purchase of these easements; MFU would like to explore the possibility of farmers being compensated annually for these easements. Project owners, such as the ones owning say a wind turbine will be getting compensated on a regular basis, while a landowner gets a onetime payment, but has to work around the lines the rest of our lives.

Landowners must be compensated fairly for there land, MFU would also propose that the landowner have a say in selecting the appraiser to make the land evaluation.

While we are not testifying in person today, MFU does request that this Committee take the time to hold a hearing early in the 2005-2006 Legislative session to discuss the very important issue of transmission line land acquisition and compensation. Thank-you for your time.