

Prairie County Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting Wind Turbine Decommissioning, and
Tax Training.

July 17th, 2025

Prairie County Court House Court Room
217 West Park St Terry, MT 59349

www.prairiecounty.org

Commissioner Tood Devlin, Christine Keltner and Dennis Teske meet in special session in the courtroom. Also in attendance Administrative Assistant Harry McNall, County Attorney Dan Rice, and Sheriff Lewis and a number of public citizens also attended the meeting. Ross Freehan from NextEra phoned into the conversation.

9:00 a.m. Pledge of Allegiance. Call to order.

9:01 a.m. Commissioners began a review of the Decommissioning Agreement from NextEra (The Glendive Wind Project LLC), by paragraph, reviewing each paragraph and discussing it. Decommissioning is at year 15 by DEQ.

Q: Commissioners; Does decommissioning mean that the total of all materials is removed?

A: NextEra Ross Freehan: The agreement with landowners determines the amount of the foundation to be removed. Requirements are 3 ft for foundation, 2ft for cables. The requirements are post land use requirements, so that the land can be used as it was before the project.

Q: Commissioners; Who determines the firm for decommissioning professional engineer?

A: NextEra; We can agree upon the engineer with the commissioners.

Q: Commissioners: Shouldn't the bond be the same price as it cost to construct?

A: NextEra; It is covered later in the document and the person who sets this will be agreed upon by both NextEra and Commissioners. It is a 100% decommission. The operator does the decommissioning of the project; the bond is an insurance policy.

Q: Commissioners; Does DEQ have the final say in the amount of the bond?

A: NextEra; Both the DEQ professional and the Engineer provide an estimate to DEQ and the review and can make changes.

Dan Rice: Note under Review of Draft Plan: The county is not prohibited, they can submit its comments directly to Montana DEQ. The draft says, "That Glendive Wind doesn't have to use the comments when submitting its application to DEQ."

DEQ: Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Q: Modified/Amended Plans: Every 5 years there is a review of the plan and allows for inflation cost changes. This is all state jurisdictions and their requirements, "not the county".

Q: Dan Rice; “C. Generally that notice must be given to the county before the request of amendment”. “20 Business days’ notice”.

Note: 3. Bond (A). An independent evaluator acceptable to the county.

Note: 2. Bond (B). The independent evaluator is acceptable to the county. (Needs Clarification: Initial bond and Updated Bond, County vs. Montana State).

A: NextEra: The state bond kicks in 12 months after operation kicks off, goes to state. Before that it is with the County.

Note: 2 Bond (B) Within 12 months after operation kicks off.

Note: 5 No Transferability: New bonds for new ownership through DEQ.

Note: 7 Miscellaneous (A): The uses of “May” instead of “Would” in first sentence. Last sentence, “And/or injunctive relief are accumulative and should not be exclusive.”

Note K. Needs to be removed in its entirety, the county commissioner wants it struck from the agreement. “The county will not waive their rights.”

10:00 a.m. Short Break, back at 10:08 a.m.

10:08 a.m. Public Comment

Shane Eaton: Thanked the commissioners for this meeting and the opportunity to comment. The citizens have ask the commissioners to be in charge in the form of a zoning permit. He asks that the commissioners don’t sign this until a zoning document is completed. Start the process for a zoning board and consider putting together a zoning permit. The Decommissioning agreement doesn’t really matter, in this agreement. The county should be in charge of regulations through zoning permit.

Reene Pirtz: The planning board has been working on this, and the county has been working on it. Don’t sign this agreement, there are many reasons not to sign this agreement. The people want protection from this and other issues coming down the road. The county has to hold on to their rights and want guardrails up that the county writes. She urges the county commissioners to hold on and wait for the land planning board. Table this agreement.

Dave Hudson Terry Montana, the Glendive Wind Project has been advertising all over social media. They are trying to buffalo the citizens with money. He believes we are being run over, and he supports Shane and Reene’s comments about this agreement.

Arron Martinson, in the decommissioning agreement, there is nothing about the roads. The roads should be a part of this agreement. In ads on social media, they are speaking of restoring the surface. Lots of loopholes in the stories that are being told.

Tim Popper Prairie County: The gap in bonding of 90 days, there is a history of large facilities going bankrupt across the country including steel mills. The tax relief value is higher than the operational profit. He respectfully asks the commissioners to address the gap.

Scott Eaton, will this agreement go through another public comment after draft. He has a question on 7 (A): County attorney Dan Rice gave a few examples of breach enforcement from the county.

Rolane Christofferson: Resident that lease to wind turbine companies. Zoning should be in place to manage development not to stop it. When do her rights begin and end? And others outside of the agreement start and end? Several people she has talked to who use to be against development have changed their minds. We need money for the county, this would be good revenue for the county, she wants to see the wind development go through. She thanks the commissioners and the planning board for their hard work.

Mary Boucher: When something new comes in, if you don't have restrictions or guidelines. The neighbor next door has some rights as well and should not be stuck with the mess.

Commissioner Teske has a comment; he has a couple of studies provided by NextEra. The neighbor's property cannot invade the property of the next-door neighbors. He lists many issues with wind turbines that affect next door property owners. Whatever is agreed upon, must be what we can live with in the future.

Public comments should be made about the agreement.

Harry McNall ask NextEra what is the purpose of this agreement? Is it required by law or is it to work with the county? Why this agreement?

A: NextEra; This is not a requirement by law; it is putting in writing what we have been saying all along, on what we would agree to do.

Will Connley Terry Tribune Reporter: Question about exhibit (A): What will the plan look like?

Dan Rice: we will be able to see the plan. There would be public hearing over the plan in the future.

Arron Martinson: Structures, there is more than just structures, there are roads, weeds etc. Approaches and beyond the county road are the concern.

Reene Pirtz: What happens if the risk isn't isolated? Every project brings its risks, what are they doing with the decommissioning materials? They accumulate materials etc. What happens on one persons property can affect other property owners etc. She read a list of concerns over time and from large projects. Decommissioning will affect everyone.

Shane Eaton: Look at equal fitting and state statue. BLM is not DEQ, they have their own standards. Three standards, BLM, State of Montana, Private Landowners. State will not change standards, it is up to the county to set permits and standards of decommissioning.

Scott Eaton, at the end of decommissioning is there a plan where the towers and material will go?

NextEra: there is no plan at this point where it will go.

Commissioner Devlin, we will give a 30-day comment period now and a final draft after comments have been received.

Arron Martinson: Are we signing an agreement before seeing the plan?

Dan Rice: We don't have any authority over the plan; this agreement gives us rights with the plan.

The public meeting is adjourned concerning the decommissioning agreement.

Tax Revenue Meeting

There will be one change this year and others next year.

The conversation was recorded by the county the webinar was recorded by the Montana League of cities and towns.

The web training explained taxation over the next few years concerning property taxes and property categories.

SB 542 HB 241

Signed this 23rd day of July 2025



Todd Devlin, Commissioner Chair

ATTEST: 

Shari Robertson, Clerk & Recorder

By: 