

Nebraska's agriculture industry has a right to farm and conduct agricultural activities that are reasonable and directly related to farm/agriculture activities. The placement of large scale electric power generation facilities (wind turbines) are not an agricultural or farming activity and should not be treated as such. Landowners (farming operations) do not have an unfettered right to host large commercial power generation facilities under the guise of a farming/agriculture activity. The facilities being proposed are specific for commercial power generation and must meet stricter safety protections with regard to the health, safety and wellbeing of the public.

The "wind industry" typically assess the safety risk associated with their industry with a probabilistic risk assessment which assumes that people are periodically in and around the area of their facilities. In Nebraska, existing power plants use the deterministic risk assessment that assumes people are in the safety zone of the facility. Knowing that the wind turbine facilities will be placed in populated areas and that people will be within the safety zones of the facilities is it not the responsibility of the County to ensure their safety is based on a deterministic risk assessment?

These risks need to be assessed knowing that people will be living, traveling roadways and farming in close proximity to the turbines. A few safety risks acknowledged by the industry are tower collapse, fire, ice and blade throw. The factual information regarding the distance of ice throw (1100-1300 feet safe zone), and blade failure/ throw (greater than 1700 feet) is known and proven, however, it is summarily set aside as the industry states these occurrence's rarely happen when in fact fire, ice throw and blade failure occur at a far more frequent interval than tower collapse. The safety evacuation zones are recognized at 1640 feet. In assessing these risks all possibilities need to be recognized and addressed and not only the lowest risk of each area.

The placement of such a large intrusive industrial complex within an agricultural zoned area without proper safeguards for the public will have long lasting negative effects for those living in the area, future development and the public. These setbacks in no way preclude the wind industry from developing their facilities, by ensuring public safety it only requires the industry to properly site the facilities in areas ensuring public health, safety and wellbeing.

The industrial wind generation facility being proposed covers a large populated area that has coexisted as an agricultural community first and not an industrial park. Neighbors are not allowed to cause damage to or limit the use of another's property through agricultural practices and certainly not by large scale commercial facilities. All risks associated with wind generation facilities need to be assessed and included in the zoning setbacks to increase the safety zones to 500 meters around these facilities as a reasonable safeguard for those living, working or traveling through these areas. Finally by requiring setbacks to begin at the property line reduces the risk to nonparticipating neighbors and the public that may unknowingly enter into the safety zone of these facilities. It only takes one incident (fire, ice/blade throw) to cause a tragedy.

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