

Attachment to agenda item PW072815-10 August 3 Rapid City Council meeting

Good afternoon to the members of the Rapid City Public Works Committee,

My name is Gena Parkhurst and I am the current Chairperson of the Black Hills Chapter of Dakota Rural Action. I am here today to ask for your support of the Renewable Energy Resolution before you today.

The Black Hills Chapter of Dakota Rural Action has about 135 current members who very much support this resolution and would like to see it pass.

You may have noticed two articles in the July 4th edition of the Rapid City Journal addressing the topic of Renewable Energy. Brenda G. Moore wrote an Opinion piece in which she announced that South Dakota has just essentially won the energy lottery, akin to electrification, with the news that Basin Electric and Western Area Power Administration (also known as WAPA) will be integrated with the Southwest Power Pool energy network.

Ms. Moore explains that this new alliance will allow South Dakota to sell power as far south as Texas and Louisiana, and at prices almost triple local rates.

As you are most likely aware, South Dakota has the 4th largest wind resource in the nation, yet ranks 19th in installed wind capacity. Our solar potential is also huge, and with newer photovoltaic technologies gaining efficiency at roughly 10% per year, our solar potential may outstrip our wind potential by 2020, especially west of the Missouri River according to Brenda G. Moore. She also points out that we already export our cattle, corn, and hay with great financial benefit – why not export our wind and solar as well? These forms of energy could be seen as another agricultural resource, making the most of our windy open spaces.

On this same page of the Rapid City Journal, David Johnson of the Johnson Tree Company and member of the Rapid City Sustainability Committee reminds us of two purposes of the Committee: 1) “to foster the stewardship of our urban environment,” and 2) “to encourage sound economic plans for responsible fiscal growth.” I assert that the Renewable Energy Resolution before you today is in alignment with these purposes of the Rapid City Sustainability Committee, and it would be timely for the Rapid City Public Works Committee to adopt this Resolution given the exciting opportunity for South Dakota to sell renewable energy on the national market to bolster local revenues and energy independence. Thank you.