



Resource Conservation & Development, Inc.

Empowering Citizens to Build Strong Communities

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November 12, 2009

The Honorable Ben Nelson
720 Hart Senator Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Wind Energy Training Center Proposal for Western Nebraska Community College

Dear Senator Nelson:

On behalf of the Panhandle RC&D, I am requesting your assistance in the creation of a Wind Energy Training Center at Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC). A WNCC Wind Energy Training Center would train wind energy technicians to support existing wind farms and to help build those that are in development throughout the region. It would provide opportunities for continuing education for existing energy industry employees. This proposed project is one that has the full backing of our board.

This type of project is important to both economic and workforce development in western Nebraska. It would increase job opportunities and keep Nebraska competitive in the field of energy technology, which is in the best interests of entities such as ours, which require a trained pool of workers who will help us to sustain and grow renewable energy programs.

Not only is WNCC in close geographical proximity to existing and new wind energy projects, but also a Wind Energy Training Center would dovetail with existing programs at WNCC, such as the institution's successful aviation maintenance program. The curriculum for the aviation maintenance program already includes courses that would be necessary for wind technicians, including courses in electrical systems, electronics, turbine repair and maintenance and programmable logic controllers.

Panhandle RC&D supports the efforts of WNCC to improve Nebraska's competitiveness in the renewable energy arena. Such a project will benefit western Nebraska communities, utility providers, business and industry. Please give serious consideration to funding a Wind Energy Training Center at Western Nebraska Community College.

Sincerely,

Lawrence C. Gibbs
Board President