



News Release

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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KOHLER CO. REMARKS AT PUBLIC HEARING ON DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PROPOSED TOWN OF WILSON GOLF COURSE

Jay Hoekstra, Hospitality Construction Portfolio Manager for Kohler Co. and team leader for the company's proposed Town of Wilson golf course, made the following remarks at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' public hearing on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the project. The hearing was held Wednesday, July 20, at Sheboygan Falls High School.

Good evening. My name is Jay Hoekstra. I am Kohler Co.'s team leader for the proposed Town of Wilson golf course. I am the only member of the project team who will speak tonight.

For 143 years, Kohler Co. has believed that sound business decisions and a strong environmental commitment go hand-in-hand. Our goal with this project is to have a world-class destination that creates hundreds of jobs and provides multimillion-dollar economic benefits for the region. We plan to do that in an environmentally responsible manner that serves the community, provides new opportunities for discovery, and preserves and opens private land to the public for generations to come.

We appreciate the careful scrutiny the DNR is giving to our proposal and believe the draft Environmental Impact Statement shows we can meet the applicable standards. The principles of avoiding, minimizing or mitigating potential environmental impacts have guided our planning. Our minimalist design embraces the land's natural contours and preserves the major dune structures, respecting the site's natural character.

The extensive draft EIS details how wetland will be preserved. It covers how invasive species now choking good plant life will be removed, and how we'll add more native plants and grasses to preserve and enhance naturally occurring ecosystems. The draft EIS outlines Kohler Co.'s strong commitment to responsible pesticide and fertilizer use. Our Sheboygan County golf courses have been in full compliance with their permits for 30 years, and none has ever had an environmental citation. That commitment extends to this project – the draft EIS confirms our thoughtful approach will prevent runoff into Lake Michigan and the Black River.

The draft EIS also shows no anticipated impacts to neighboring wells or regional wetland. As a precaution we will establish a well-protection program for Town of Wilson residents.

Being a good neighbor is important to us. We're pleased that this project will enhance the diversity of existing environs and create public access to the site. Additionally, we intend to grant a permanent, legally designated lakeshore easement for Timberlake homeowners once the golf course is built. And, as the draft EIS notes, our plans use an entry that avoids neighboring homes. We believe enhancing this route also improves public access to John Michael Kohler and Terry Andrae State Parks.

We have always planned to leave the burial mounds on a small part of the site completely undisturbed. Recent archaeological findings offer opportunities for new learning as the project moves forward. We will work cooperatively with both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and with the various Native American Tribes – in a spirit of respect, discovery and education. The draft EIS confirms the site is zoned appropriately for a golf course.

Our company has owned this land for more than 75 years, and has been part of this community for more than four generations. To work for Kohler Co., this project has to work for the environment, and it has to work for the community. We appreciate the passion people have shown for our property, and we've heard from many people who support and are excited about our plans. We are fully committed to working through the established permitting and approval processes. We look forward to ongoing public dialogue.

Thank you.