



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

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In reply refer to: PGC-6

To: People Interested in the Condon Wind Project

SeaWest WindPower, Inc. is proposing to build a new wind energy facility near Condon in Gilliam County, Oregon. Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to purchase the electrical output from the project and provide transmission. This letter gives an update on the project and summarizes comments we received in July when the project was first announced and we held meetings in Condon and Arlington.

Proposed Project

SeaWest proposes to build and operate a wind generation facility on private land northwest of Condon (see attached map). SeaWest is studying a larger area initially and would locate the facility within that area based on wind conditions and environmental studies. The facility would generate about 24.5 megawatts (MW) of power (one average MW can provide electricity for 250 homes).

There is a relationship between number, height, and spacing of turbines: as the size of turbines increases, the spacing between them increases, and the number needed decreases. SeaWest has not yet chosen the turbine models, so exact numbers, distances, and heights are not yet known. The range of turbine designs being considered would produce from 600 to 1650 kilowatts of power (1000 kilowatts is equal to one MW). With the largest turbines, 15 would be needed; with the smallest, 41. Turbines would be placed in strings (or rows) with from 250 to 690 feet between each turbine in a string. The total turbine height, including the rotor blades, would be from 236 to 378 feet

Power from the turbines would be collected by an underground and overhead cable loop. It would then be transmitted 1-2 miles to a new ½-1 acre substation located near the BPA transmission line. The power would be transferred to the existing BPA 69-kilovolt transmission line that runs between De Moss and Condon Substations.

The project would also require access roads, an operation and maintenance building, and onsite storage. SeaWest would like to begin construction in mid to late 2001, with commercial operation starting in late 2001. The project would operate for at least 20 years.

Environmental Analysis

As a Federal agency, BPA must study the environmental impacts, both adverse and beneficial, of this proposed project before it can take action. This policy is set out in the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 that requires potential environmental impacts of a proposed action to be made public before decision-making. Environmental impacts will be discussed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Public Comments

In July we asked for comments on the proposal to help us develop the environmental study. We mailed a comment form, held two public meetings, and asked people to phone, write, or e-mail any comments. We received 243 comments. The comments covered all aspects of the project and the EIS.

People clearly supported wind power, but wanted to know more about how it works. Sixty-seven comments sought information about the project design.

How many towers will there be?
How tall will they be?
How big are the blades?
How much wind is needed?

Environmental topics attracted 109 comments. The category receiving most comments was Socioeconomic. Of particular interest was how the project would affect local taxes, power rates, and employment.

Who will pay the taxes on the land?
Is there a royalty payment to the local government?
Reducing rates would be a good outcome.
How many jobs would be available to local residents?

Two other categories drew attention. The topic of Fish, Wildlife, and Vegetation received 15 comments; nearly all dealt with birds. Specifically named were: raptors, geese, merlin, owl, chukar, pheasant, bluebird, robin, and bald eagle.

There were 12 comments on Land Use/Recreation. Most of those focused on how the project would affect farming.

How We Use the Comments

All the comments we received will help shape the analysis in the EIS. The comments have helped us to identify the key issues to be addressed in the EIS, as well as the impacts of most concern. Everyone who commented has been added to the project mail list.

Project Schedule and Next Steps

We are progressing according to schedule and plan to have a Draft EIS ready for public review next March. Please fill-in and return the enclosed postcard to let us know if you would like to receive the entire EIS (around 250 pages), the summary (around 25 pages), or a copy by electronic mail. Even if you don't return the postcard, we will let you know when the Draft EIS is available.

If you have any questions about the proposal, please call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713, call my direct number at (503) 230-4386, or send an e-mail to gddarr@bpa.gov. Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ George Darr

George D. Darr
 Project Manager

Enclosures:
 Map
 Postcard