



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
1520 Kelly Place
Walla Walla, Washington 99362

March 26, 2002

In reply refer to: PTS/Walla Walla

To: People Interested in the Maiden Wind Farm

We would like to hear from you about Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Benton County's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Maiden Wind Farm. If you requested a copy of the Draft EIS or Summary, it is enclosed for your review. Comments will be accepted until May 15, 2002.

The Draft EIS describes the proposed project, tells why it may be needed, discusses the environmental and social impacts the project could create, and lists the mitigation measures that would lessen or eliminate those impacts. We greatly appreciate your time in reviewing the document and giving us your comments.

Public Meeting

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Prosser Senior Citizen Center
1231 Dudley Avenue
Prosser, Washington

The meeting will be an informal, open house. Come anytime between 4:00 and 7:00, when it is convenient for you. Members of the project team will be available to describe the proposed project and the environmental studies performed, and answer your questions.

How to Comment

If you have comments on the Maiden Wind Farm Draft EIS, you can give them to us at the public meeting or submit your comments to either:

BPA Communications, KC-7
P.O. Box 12999
Portland, OR, 97212
comment@bpa.gov

Benton County Planning
P.O. Box 910
Prosser, WA 99350
mike.shuttleworth@co.benton.wa.us

or call toll free at 1-800-622-4519 and record your comments.

Proposal

Washington Winds Inc. is proposing to build and operate a new wind energy facility near Sunnyside in Benton and Yakima Counties, Washington. Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to purchase up to 50 average megawatts (aMW) of the electrical output from the project and provide transmission. Benton and Yakima Counties have received applications from Washington Winds for Conditional Use Permits.

The facility would generate between 150 and 494 megawatts of power. (A megawatt is an electrical unit of power equal to 1,000 kilowatts.) Washington Winds is considering using turbines ranging from 900-kilowatt (kW) to 2,000-kW output each. Washington Winds has not yet picked a turbine design, or decided how large a project to build, so exact numbers of turbines are not yet known. Power from the project would most likely be interconnected to BPA's existing Midway-Big Eddy 230-kV transmission line that transects the western portion of the project site.

Environmental Analysis

BPA, as a Federal agency, must study the environmental impacts of a proposed project before it can take action. This policy is set out in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. The Act requires that significant environmental impacts of a proposed action be discussed in an Environmental Impact Statement. Because we are proposing to purchase power from the Maiden Wind Farm, we will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the entire proposal.

As permitting agencies, Benton and Yakima Counties are required to follow Washington's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Benton and Yakima Counties are cooperating agencies with BPA and the Environmental Impact Statement will provide the analyses needed for both NEPA and SEPA.

Process/Schedule

We will read and consider all the comments submitted during the comment period, which ends on May 15, 2002. We expect to publish a Final EIS in summer 2002 (if you received the Draft EIS, you will also receive a Final EIS unless you tell us you do not want a copy). All comments and our responses to those comments will be published in the Final EIS. Also, where appropriate, the Final EIS will be updated with any changes to the proposal or analysis in response to comments. Once we have completed the Final EIS, BPA will issue a Record of Decision outlining whether and how we will proceed with the project. Benton and Yakima Counties will use the EIS in deciding whether to grant CUPs for the proposed project, as well as necessary construction related permits.

For More Information

Copies of the Draft EIS or Summary are available by contacting 1-800-622-4520. The document is also posted on BPA's website at www.efw.bpa.gov – click on environmental planning/analysis, then on Active Projects. For further information regarding this proposal or the Draft EIS, please contact Sarah Branum at BPA toll-free at 1-800-282-3713, (or direct number 503-230-5115), or stbranum@bpa.gov; or contact Mike Shuttleworth at Benton County at 509-786-5612, or mike.shuttleworth@co.benton.wa.us. Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

Tom Osborn
Project Manager

Terry A Marden
Benton County SEPA Administrator