



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
1520 Kelly Place
Walla Walla, Washington 99362

June 11, 2001

In reply refer to: PGCM/Richland

To: People Interested in the Maiden Wind Farm

Washington Winds, Inc. is proposing to build a new wind energy facility near Sunnyside in Benton and Yakima Counties, Washington (see enclosed map). Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to purchase the electrical output from the project and provide transmission. Benton and Yakima Counties have received applications from Washington Winds for Conditional Use Permits. This letter briefly explains the proposal and invites you to a public meeting in Prosser to learn more. You are also invited to comment on the proposal.

Tuesday, June 26, 2001

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 proposal and answer your questions. We plan a brief presentation around 5:30.

Proposal

Washington Winds proposes to build and operate a wind generation facility on private land north of Prosser and northeast of Sunnyside. Washington Winds 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 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. The height of the turbines would range from approximately 246 feet to 380 feet, depending upon the turbine size. Approximately 167 to 549 wind turbines would be arranged in several "strings," with approximately 250 to 450 feet between turbines in each string, depending upon the turbine size and topographical features. Washington Winds has not yet picked a turbine design, or decided how large a project to build, so exact numbers and distances are not yet known.

Power from the turbines would be collected by an underground and overhead cable loop. It would then be fed underground to one or two proposed 2-4 acre substations located on the project site. From the substation site(s), power from the project would be interconnected to BPA's existing Hanford-John Day 500-kilovolts (kV), Midway-Big Eddy 230-kV, or the

Midway-Grandview 115-kV transmission lines that transect the project site. Other facilities required as part of the project are small pad-mounted transformers located at the base of each wind turbine tower, access roads, and two or three operation and maintenance buildings.

Washington Winds would like to begin construction in March 2002, with commercial operation starting in November 2002. The project would operate for at least 20 years.

Environmental Analysis

Bonneville, 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 will be cooperating agencies with BPA and the Environmental Impact Statement will provide the analyses needed for both NEPA and SEPA.

To Comment

If you have comments on the proposed Maiden Wind Farm, you can give them to us at the public meetings, leave a message on our toll-free comment line at 1-800-622-4519, send an e-mail to comment@bpa.gov, or mail them to: Bonneville Power Administration, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, OR 97212. If you comment by July 13, 2001, your ideas can affect the scope of our environmental studies.

For More Information

If you have any questions about the proposal, please call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713, call my direct number (509) 527-6211, or send an e-mail to trosborn@bpa.gov. Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

Tom Osborn
Project Manager

Enclosure: Map

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Official File – EQ-14

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