



U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0552

July 18, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

I am writing to reiterate my concerns with the Tule Wind Energy project, proposed by Iberdrola Renewables, in the McCain Valley, located in my congressional district. Previously, I provided correspondence to the California Public Utilities Commission and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), a copy of which is enclosed for your reference, where I outlined several concerns with this project and described the adverse impact this particular effort will have on my constituents in terms of quality of living, property values, health conditions, wildfire risk and threats to environmental and cultural protection.

The McCain Valley National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area in Eastern San Diego County, where this project will be located, consists of tribal and non-tribal homes and public campgrounds, all in an area of high fire risk. The introduction of industrial wind turbines and related electrical infrastructure into these sensitive wild land and interface areas, with severely limited fire fighting infrastructure, increases the risk of catastrophic wildfires and, correspondingly, the fire and property insurance rates for the impacted communities. Unfortunately, I have learned that some property owners in this area are already facing prospects of cancellation.

Many local Native American tribes, including the Manzanita, Viejas and Campo Bands of the Kumeyaay Nation, have stated their objections to this project as well. Letters submitted on the joint Tule Wind Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/EIS) by the tribal leadership and individual members of these tribes document their concerns on how this project will impact the rapidly declining Golden Eagle population and adversely affect their sacred tribal ancestral grounds.

In addition, the Tule Wind project is still in need of completion of several local requirements. This includes the Major Use Permit process with the County of San Diego for purposes of constructing a new project access road, an "accurate and thorough groundwater investigation" for project construction, a new transmission line right-of-way, a revised fire protection plan, and other critical and unresolved project details. Additionally, despite arguments that this project will have minimal disruption to community planning, it is my understanding that Tule Wind LLC has found it necessary to apply for amendments to the

County's current General Plan, as well as the Draft Boulevard Community Plan and the current Wind Energy Ordinance, the pending revision of which is not expected to start the public review process until later this year.

Mr. Secretary, as I have stated on several occasions, I am not opposed to the development of alternative energy and I recognize the benefit it has in our ongoing efforts to make our nation more energy independent. When it comes to energy research, exploration and development, I am a firm believer in "all of the above" options and I have supported efforts in Congress to open new areas up to drilling and traditional fossil fuel exploration, increase development of nuclear power and encourage innovation for renewable energy resources and technologies such as solar, geo-thermal, algae, natural gas, as well as wind turbines. At the same time, I have also made clear that my support comes with the condition that these actions do not curb private property rights or adversely affect the communities in which they will exist. The Tule Wind Energy Project does not meet this standard. Taking these concerns into consideration, I once again respectfully request that your office thoroughly review the comments submitted as part of the DEIR/EIS, as well as my correspondence to the BLM, and that specific action be taken by the U.S. Department of Interior to deny this request and encourage wind turbine development be pursued in more appropriate areas.

Thank you again for your time on this critical issue. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly, or have your staff contact Michael Harrison in my office at (202) 225-5672.

With best wishes.

Sincerely,



Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress

DH/mrh
Enclosure