
From: CPuchy
Sent: Thursday, August 09, 2007 10:03 PM
To: BPA Public Involvement
Subject: Proposed Cascade Wind Interconnection Project

Attachments: Letter to A. Bless Cascade Wind Project.doc



Letter to A. Bless
Cascade Win...

August 9, 2007

Carl J. Keller
Project Environmental Lead
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, RO 97208-3621

RE: KEC-4 Proposed Cascade Wind Interconnection Project

Dear Mr. Keller:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Cascade Wind Interconnection Project. Please submit this email and the attached letter into your records.

I own 12.4 acres in the Rowena Wild development in Wasco County, which is very close to the proposed Cascade Wind Farm on Seven Mile Hill, and the proposed Interconnection Project. I submitted comments to Mr. Adam Bless (State of Oregon) on May 24, 2007 (copy of my email letter is attached), which addressed a number of the categories in BPA's Business Plan (Final EIS) for all transmission lines (particularly land use, health and safety, vegetation and wildlife, and visual resources). In addition to the comments I submitted to Mr. Bless, I would echo the points made by Mr. Kenneth A. Thomas in his July 6, 2007 to you.

Although I am a landowner in the project vicinity, I only learned of the project through other landowners, not through any direct contact by UPC or BPA. Please add me to your project mailing list so I can keep abreast of issues, upcoming decisions and comment deadlines.

Respectfully,

Claire A. Puchy

From: Claire A Puchy

May 24, 2007

Dear Mr. Bless:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Cascade Wind Farm Sighting Application. I own 12.4 acres in the Rowena Wilds development in Wasco County, very close to the proposed wind farm on Seven Mile Hill. I have been professionally involved in conservation, land use and wildlife issues for over 30 years. I support alternative energy, including wind and solar energy production (I live in a passive solar house), and strongly believe we must pursue energy resources other than coal, hydropower and petroleum. However, I also recognize that the location and scale of wind energy development is critical, and that not all sites are appropriate. The proposal for the Cascade Wind Farm is large-scale and, in my opinion, would result in unacceptable negative impacts to wildlife and wildlife habitat, and other natural and scenic resources, including the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area. I urge you to deny the application for a number of reasons.

From a personal standpoint, I am extremely concerned about the potential impacts of Cascade Wind Farm's proposal on my property (i.e., property value, my health, visual impacts, native plants and wildlife, fire safety, recreation). However, my other concerns are the impacts this proposal would have on those things throughout the Seven Mile Hill area, and in particular the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA). I realize that the Gorge Commission may not have a legal "say" regarding this proposal per se, since it is not within the boundaries of the National Scenic Area. However, it would be visible from a number of areas within the NSA. Congress established a National SCENIC Area, with the explicit goal of protecting scenic values. In addition to protecting scenic values, the other stated objectives of the NSA Act are to protect the natural and recreational resources in the NSA. The proposal would negatively affect all of those values in the NSA (for example, it would negatively affect air quality during construction, and scenic and wildlife resources in all phases of development and energy production). The NSA is a national treasure of all Americans, and we have both a legal and moral obligation to protect it.

My understanding is that the State Siting Council "shall not issue a site certificate for a proposed facility located in the areas listed below. To issue a site certificate for a proposed facility located outside the areas listed below, the Council must find that, taking into account mitigation, the design, construction and operation of the facility are not likely to result in significant adverse impact to the areas listed below". One of the "areas listed below" is the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. I believe that no amount of "mitigation" will compensate for the negative impacts this facility would have on the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

As a professional in natural resources and wildlife management, I am particularly concerned about the impacts of the proposed wind farm on birds and bats in the area. I have compiled biological records on my property and in the vicinity of the proposed site during the ten years that I have owned property in Rowena Wilds. There are several species that are on the State Sensitive Species List, as well as others that are species of concern in the Oregon Conservation Strategy (approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in October 2006) that inhabit the proposed project area and vicinity (including my property). Some examples include Lewis' woodpecker and white-breasted nuthatch. In fact, the Rowena Wilds Community is a recent recipient of a State Landowner Grant for habitat improvement for these species. It would be tragic if the wind farm proposal would proceed and negate the efforts of the Rowena Wilds residents to improve the status of these species and their habitats. The Lewis woodpecker, in particular, has been documented as declining

in the State of Oregon due to loss of habitat, and the Wasco County area is one of the species' last remaining strongholds. The proposed wind facility could jeopardize the species'.

There are also a number of neotropical migratory bird species that I have recorded on my property and throughout Rowena Wilds (I am happy to provide you with records). Also recorded are a number of native plant species/communities-- several of which are endemic.

I am unaware of any surveys for these birds and plants on the proposed wind farm site. Such surveys need to be conducted prior to any serious consideration of the proposal by your agency.

There are also many other bird species that migrate through the area of the proposed project (e.g., raptors), and would therefore, be subject to the impacts of the proposed wind farm. Impacts include collision mortality, loss and degradation of habitat, disturbance and subsequent displacement from habitat, and disruption of ecological links. I urge you to read the testimony of Mike Daulton, Director of Conservation Policy for the National Audubon Society, before the Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, regarding Impacts of Wind Turbines on Birds and Bats (May 1, 2007). The website references to his testimony, as well as statements from Audubon's senior vice president for public policy, are listed below:

Wind Farms Useful but May Threaten Birds (Betsy Loyless, Audubon's senior vice president for public policy, quoted in an article weighing the benefits and costs of wind power) http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/03/AR2007050300726_pf.html

Wind Farms Urged to go Easy on Birds and Bats (Story highlighting the benefits of properly-sited wind turbines quotes Mike Daulton, Audubon's director of conservation policy) <http://www.reuters.com/article/scienceNews/idUSN0445290020070507?feedType=RSS>

To my knowledge, there have not been any detailed bat surveys in the area. Ms. Pat Ormsbee, an employee of the National Forest Service, one of the leading experts about bats in the Pacific Northwest, and currently the President of the western states' working group on bats, believes that the Columbia River Gorge area is a very important migratory route for a number of bat species (personal communication, April 2007). Again, Mr. Daulton's testimony provides arguments that speak to the issue of impacts of wind facilities on bat populations. The specific potential impacts of locating a wind facility within the Gorge area are unknown, but likely to have negative impacts on several bat species that are of state concern, and that are listed as such on Oregon's Sensitive Species List, as well as are Species of Concern in the State Conservation Strategy.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Claire A. Puchy*

* Former Executive Director of the following organizations: Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Wildlife Diversity Program, Portland Audubon Society.