

NEWS Release BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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BLM
Oregon State Office

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-09-01
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BLM and the State of Oregon Announce Wind Energy Agreement

Portland, OR – Today the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the State of Oregon Department of Energy announced the completion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the environmental review and siting of future wind energy projects in the State of Oregon.

Specifically, the MOU documents the roles, responsibilities, and procedures to follow in conducting a joint environmental review of commercial wind energy generation development projects by the BLM and the Oregon Department of Energy. “With this MOU we’re hoping to continue on with a harmonious relationship between the BLM and the Oregon Department of Energy in the review of all permit applications for future wind energy generation projects,” said BLM Oregon/Washington State Director Ed Shepard.

Under federal law, BLM is responsible for processing requests for rights-of-way to authorize the Projects and associated transmission lines and other appurtenant facilities to be constructed and operated on land it manages. In processing the applications, BLM must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires that federal agencies reviewing projects under their jurisdiction consider the environmental impacts associated with their construction and operation. Where appropriate, BLM may also consult with Native American tribes.

“We’re certain that this MOU will result in a public participation process and environmental documents that fully meet Federal and State requirements,” said Oregon Department of Energy Director Michael Graine.

Under Oregon law, the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) decides whether large energy facilities can be built. The Council is a seven-member citizen board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Oregon Department of Energy is staff to the Council. The State is responsible for reviewing the applications for energy facility site certifications, and also has the obligation to conduct wind energy application review in a matter that is consistent with and does not duplicate Federal agency review. Additionally, the EFSC designates a special advisory group within the county or other governing body where the facility is proposed. This action brings important local input into the project.



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It is in the interest of the parties to share in the preparation of the NEPA document for all proposed projects in a public process in Oregon to avoid duplication of efforts, to share staff expertise and information, to promote intergovernmental coordination at the local, State, and Federal levels, to provide clarity in permitting requirements for the applicant, and to facilitate public review by providing a joint environmental document and a more efficient environmental review process.

To date, BLM has received right-of-way requests for development of numerous wind energy projects in the State of Oregon, but none of these projects have reached the planning stage.

A copy of the MOU is available online at:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/energy/index.php>

About the BLM:

The BLM manages more land – 256 million acres – than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

About the State Department of Energy:

The Department of Energy was created in 1975. The department protects Oregon's environment by saving energy, developing clean energy resources and cleaning up nuclear waste. To encourage investments in energy efficiency and conservation, the office offers loans, tax credits, information, and technical expertise to households, businesses, schools and governments. The office aims to ensure that Oregon's mix of energy resources minimizes harm to the environment and reliably meets the state's needs. To meet this commitment, the office formulates energy policies, advances the development of renewable energy resources, and evaluates whether proposed energy facilities are economically and environmentally sound. The office also oversees the cleanup and transport of radioactive waste and develops and implements emergency plans for accidents involving radioactive materials. A major focus is the cleanup of radioactive waste at the Hanford nuclear site on the Columbia River in eastern Washington.



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