



BLM FACT SHEET

U.S. Department of the Interior • Bureau of Land Management • Washington, D.C., Office • 1849 C Street N.W. • Washington, D.C.

Renewable Energy: Wind

The BLM manages 20.6 million acres of public lands with wind potential. The BLM has authorized 40 wind energy development projects, including connected-action projects that include electric transmission support authorizations, with a total approved capacity of 5,608 megawatts, enough to supply the power needs of nearly 2 million homes. In addition, the BLM has authorized hundreds of wind energy testing sites, with 59 pending and 33 authorized energy testing applications.

A Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) relating to the development of wind energy on the public lands was completed in June 2005. This EIS provides an analysis of the development of wind energy projects on the public lands in the West. In conjunction with the publication of this EIS, the BLM amended 52 land use plans to allow for the use of applicable lands for wind energy development. BLM offices are able to use this EIS as an aid in analyzing impacts for specific applications for the use of public lands for wind energy use. The BLM issued a wind energy policy in December 2008 to provide guidance on best management practices; measures to mitigate potential impacts on birds, wildlife habitat, and other resource values; and guidance on administering wind energy authorizations.

The BLM is currently undergoing a rulemaking process that would promote the use of preferred areas for wind energy development and establish competitive processes, terms, and conditions (including rental and bonding requirements) for wind energy development rights-of-way. This rulemaking effort will affect the process for receiving a wind energy ROW on BLM-administered lands. For more information, see the Proposed Rule published in the Federal Register, Vol. 79, No. 189 on September 30, 2014.

For more than a decade, wind energy has been the fastest growing energy technology worldwide, achieving an annual growth rate of over 30%. In the United States, the current total installed capacity is over 74,000 megawatts of wind projects.

Laws enacted in most of the Western states require energy companies to provide a portion of their energy from renewable energy sources. As a result, the BLM anticipates a continued interest in the use of public lands for renewable energy development.

The BLM continues to conduct studies necessary to evaluate and process applications for rights-of-way for the siting of wind energy projects and applications for rights-of-way for electric transmission lines from these projects. The BLM has approved wind energy projects in Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. The BLM currently has 20 pending wind energy development applications on over 264,000 acres of public land.

The BLM's wind energy program is part of an "all-of-the-above" strategy to improve the management of energy resources found on Federal lands in a balanced way to ensure the Nation's economic and energy security and quality of life.

For more information, visit www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/energy/renewable_energy.html

Updated July 2016

