



Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region
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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION
ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION**

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Wray Energy Project
Yuma County, Colorado
DOE/EA-1884**

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

In March 2008 Invenergy, LLC (Invenergy), submitted an interconnection request to the Western Area Power Administration (Western) to connect its proposed Wray Wind Energy Project (Project) to Western's Wray Substation. Invenergy will be the developer, contractor, and operator of the Project.

Under its Open Access Transmission Tariff (OATT), Western is required to respond to Invenergy's interconnection request. Western's Tariff conforms to section 211 of the Federal Power Act and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) Final Orders addressing non-discriminatory transmission system access. Western's Tariff provides for new interconnections to Western's transmission system by all eligible entities, consistent with, and subject to environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other environmental regulations. Under its Tariff, Western must offer access to capacity on its transmission system when capacity is available, on a non-discriminatory basis. Western also needs to ensure that by offering such capacity, existing transmission system reliability and service is not degraded by new interconnections.

In accordance with applicable regulations, Western prepared an environmental assessment (EA) entitled *Wray Wind Energy Project Environmental Assessment for Pre-Approval Review* (DOE/EA-1884). Western's purpose and need is to consider the interconnection request in accordance with its Tariff. Western's proposed Federal action is to execute an interconnection agreement to connect the proposed Project to Western's Wray Substation and to take possession of a new switchyard, and either a 4.2- or 0.75-mile double-circuit 115-kV connector line depending on the location of the new switchyard, as well as new interconnection

equipment in the existing Wray Substation. Two potential sites for the switchyard were evaluated as part of the EA.

Western's Federal action does not include Invenergy's proposed Project, which would be constructed, owned, operated, and maintained by Invenergy and is subject to Colorado's statewide utility siting authority approval. However, Western's EA analyzed and disclosed the potential environmental impacts of Invenergy's proposed Project including the two potential locations for the new switchyard and access roads. The EA identified no significant impacts to environmental resources resulting from either Western's Federal action or Invenergy's proposed Project.

The EA was distributed to interested agencies, tribes, groups, and individuals on March 9, 2012. The public comment period ended on April 9, 2012. Two comments from the general public were received during the comment period, both expressing general support for the Project. A comment letter was received from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) (formerly the Colorado Division of Wildlife) dated April 9, 2012, expressing several concerns regarding the Project's effects on wildlife. An e-mail was received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on April 11, 2012, expressing similar concerns as the CPW. These concerns have been directly addressed in Western's Comment Responses which can be found in Appendix E of the EA.

Based on the information contained in the EA, Western's Federal action would not result in significant environmental impacts. Western has determined that its action to execute an interconnection agreement with Invenergy to connect the proposed Project to Western's Wray substation, and take possession of: (1) a new switchyard, (2) either a 4.2- or 0.75-mile double-circuit 115-kV connector line (depending on the location of the new switchyard), and (3) new interconnection equipment in the existing Wray substation, does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required, and Western is issuing this finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The final EA is approved concurrently with this FONSI.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Additional information and copies of the EA and this FONSI are available to all interested parties and the public from the following contact:

Mr. Gene Iley, Jr., Environmental Manager
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A copy of the EA and FONSI are also available at the following website:
<http://www.wapa.gov/rm/Environment/default.htm>

For further information on the DOE NEPA process, contact:

Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom
Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance, GC-54
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20585
Phone: (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This FONSI was prepared in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, 40 CFR 1508.13, and the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures, 10 CFR 1021.322. The FONSI briefly presents the reasons why Western's proposal to execute an interconnection agreement for the Wray Energy Project will not have a significant impact on the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Execution of the interconnection agreement would allow Invenergy to interconnect their proposed Project to Western's existing Wray Substation. Western's EA evaluated the environmental effects of Western's proposed Federal action and also included an analysis and disclosure of the potential environmental impacts of Invenergy's proposed Project.

WESTERN'S PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTION: Western's proposed Federal action is to execute an interconnection agreement with Invenergy to connect the proposed Project to Western's Wray Substation and to take possession of: (1) a new switchyard, (2) either a 4.2 or 0.75 mile double circuit 115-kV connector line (depending on the location of the new switchyard), and (3) new interconnection equipment in the existing Wray Substation. Transmission system studies were conducted to determine the effects on power flows in the event the interconnection agreement is executed. These studies indicate that interconnection of Invenergy's proposed Project would not adversely affect transmission system operation or reliability, or impact power deliveries to existing customers.

INVENERGY'S PROPOSED PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Invenergy proposes to construct and operate a maximum 90-MW wind energy facility located on privately owned land northeast of the town of Wray in Yuma County, Colorado. Construction of the Project is proposed to begin in 2013 and would be completed in 2014. Invenergy has obtained leases from the private landowners to construct and operate the Project on private properties within the Project boundary.

The proposed Project would include up to 56 1.6-MW wind turbines. Based on the wind regime at the site, the monopole tower design will have a hub height between 260 feet and 330 feet, and a rotor diameter of up to 490 feet, depending on specific turbine technology utilized. Exact placement of the turbines and access roads may nominally change for the final siting. To allow for flexibility of turbine placement, 11 alternate locations are considered and evaluated as part of Invenergy's proposed Project.

In addition to the wind turbines, permanent support facilities at the Project would include access roads, a buried communications and electricity collection system, a collector substation, an operations and maintenance facility, a new switchyard, and new interconnection equipment in the existing Wray Substation. The 34.5-kV buried collector cables would transmit electricity from each turbine to the collector substation, which would then be stepped-up to 115-kV at the collector substation transformer. A new Project-owned, 5.3- or 8.75-mile (depending on the location of the new switchyard) overhead 115-kV transmission line would carry the electricity from the 115-kV step-up transformer at the collector substation to the new Western switchyard.

A 4.2- or 0.75-mile double-circuit 115-kV transmission line owned by Western would connect the new switchyard to Western's existing 115-kV transmission line. Access to the switchyard is not determined at this point, but potential access points have been analyzed in the EA and would not impact any known resources. Buried fiber optic collector cables connecting each turbine would provide communications and operational data for the facility. The new metal warehouse/garage-type operations and maintenance building would house the technical staff and the information technology infrastructure necessary to operate the wind facility. A full and complete Project description is included in the EA.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: The EA contains specific information on notifications to tribes, landowners, members of the public, and various local, State, and Federal agencies. Public scoping meetings were held in Wray, Colorado, on May 11, 2011, to discuss the proposed Project, to help determine important issues, and obtain local information relevant to the proposed Project. The pre-approval EA was distributed to interested agencies, tribes, groups, and individuals on March 9, 2012. All correspondence is available for review at Western's Rocky Mountain Regional Office. A copy of the EA and FONSI are available at: <http://www.wapa.gov/rm/Environment/default.htm>.

COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE PRE-APPROVAL EA: Two comment letters were received during the comment period: one from CPW dated April 6, 2012, and an e-mail from the USFWS on April 11, 2012, both expressing some concerns regarding the Project's effects on wildlife. These comment letters along with Western's responses can be viewed in appendix E of the final EA.

ALTERNATIVES: DOE's NEPA regulations require that an EA include the proposed action and the no action alternative (10 CFR 1022.321(c)).

Western's proposed action is to execute an interconnection agreement to connect the proposed Project to Western's Wray Substation, and to take possession of: (1) a new switchyard, (2) a 4.2- or 0.75-mile double-circuit 115-kV connector line (depending on the location of the new switchyard), and (3) new interconnection equipment in the existing Wray Substation. Two potential sites for the switchyard were evaluated as part of the EA. Access to the switchyard is not determined at this point, but potential access points have been analyzed in the EA and would not impact any known resources.

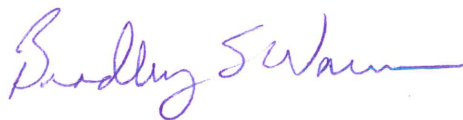
Under the no action alternative, Western would not execute an interconnection agreement or accept ownership of any new equipment or facilities. Although a decision to not execute an interconnection agreement would not necessarily stop construction of Invenergy's proposed Project, Western's no action alternative assumes that Invenergy's proposed Project would not be constructed.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF WESTERN'S ACTION: The execution of an interconnection agreement with Invenergy to connect the proposed Project to Western's Wray substation and taking possession of: (1) a new switchyard, (2) either a 4.2-or 0.75-mile double-circuit 115-kV connector line (depending on the location of the new switchyard), and (3) new interconnection equipment in the existing Wray substation, will have no significant impacts to environmental resources.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF INVENERGY'S PROPOSED PROJECT: The EA evaluated the potential for Invenergy's proposed Project to impact environmental resources found in the Project area. Invenergy has incorporated Western's Standard Construction Practices and Best Management Practices into the description of its proposed Project. The analysis of environmental impacts identified no potential impacts that would be considered significant and no mitigation measures that should be implemented additional to those already embedded within the proposed Project description. The principal reasons for the lack of significant environmental impact was the avoidance of sensitive resources during siting of the wind facility, the minor amount of disturbance at structure locations, and Invenergy's efforts to work cooperatively with affected landowners.

DETERMINATION: Based on the information contained in the EA, Western's Federal Action would not result in significant environmental impacts. Western has determined that its action to execute an interconnection agreement to connect the proposed Project to Western's Wray Substation and to take possession of a new switchyard, and either a 4.2-or 0.75-mile double-circuit 115-kV connector line depending on the location of the new switchyard, as well as new interconnection equipment in the existing Wray Substation does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, considering the Project mitigation measures and best management practices as described in the EA that are to be implemented over the course of the proposed Project, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required and Western is issuing this FONSI.

Issued at Loveland, Colorado on December 27, 2012.



Bradley S. Warren
Regional Manager