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**IMPROVING PERFORMANCE AND COST EFFECTIVENESS OF WIND ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES: GFO-16-310 (PROPOSAL #7)**

**Date:** July 20, 2017

**To:** Rizaldo Aldas, CEC

**From:** Negar Vahidi, Aspen/Tom Murphy, Aspen

**Subject:** Results of CEQA Evaluation: Proposal for researching and developing the potential of VAWTs to double capacities of California's wind resource regions while preventing harm to birds – Phase I

## Summary of Proposed Project

The Applicant, a private company (Wind Harvest International), proposes to construct up to four 70 kilowatt vertical axis wind turbines (VAWTs) and their connection to the power grid on a privately-owned ranch in Solano County (APN 0048-010-030). On-site LIDAR and anemometers (not proprietary to the Applicant) would provide data needed for analysis and modeling of VAWT created wake and turbulence. Additionally, the project would install and test a DTBird motion detection and recording system (not proprietary to the Applicant) and bird mortality study. The project would also install a second DTBird system to monitor and evaluate bird strike data at an existing VAWT location in Texas.

## Evaluation Methods

### Proposal materials reviewed:

- Attachment\_01Application\_Form\_WHI.pdf
- Attachment\_02Executive\_Summary\_Form\_WHI.doc
- Attachment\_03Fact\_Sheet\_WHI.doc
- Attachment\_04\_Project\_Narrative\_WHI.doc
- Attachment\_05Project\_Team\_Form\_WHI.docx
- Attachment\_06A\_Project\_Schedule\_for\_Scope\_of\_Work\_17\_June.xlsx
- Attachment\_06\_Scope\_of\_Work\_WHI.doc
- Attachment\_07\_Budget\_Forms\_WHI.xlsx
- Attachment\_07\_Budget\_Form\_Subcontractor\_SJSU.xlsx
- Attachment\_07\_Budget\_Form\_Subcontractor\_Stanford\_University.xlsx
- Attachment\_08CEQA\_Compliance\_Form\_for\_WHI.doc
- Attachment\_09Reference\_and\_Work\_Product\_Form\_SLele.pdf
- Attachment\_09\_Reference\_and\_Work\_Product\_Form\_Clements.doc
- Attachment\_09\_Reference\_and\_Work\_Product\_Form\_WHI.doc
- Attachment\_10Contacts\_List\_WHI.doc
- Attachment\_11Commitment\_and\_Support\_Letters\_1\_of\_6\_Stanford.pdf
- Attachment\_11Commitment\_and\_Support\_Letters\_2of6\_WHI.pdf

- Attachment\_11Commitment\_and\_Support\_Letters\_5\_of\_6\_Halloran.pdf
- Attachment\_11Commitment\_and\_Support\_Letters\_6\_of\_6\_SJSU.pdf
- Attachment\_11Commitment\_Letters\_4\_of\_6\_Emigh\_Land.pdf
- Attachment\_11\_Support\_Letters\_3\_of\_6\_Paraschivoiu.pdf
- Attachment\_12\_Cost\_and\_Benefits\_CalculationsWHI.doc
- ResumeLele2017\_NSF\_updated.pdf
- Resume\_C\_Clements\_resume.doc
- Resume\_k\_Wolf.doc

**Data accessed/ information sources:**

- 2016 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutes and Guidelines:

[http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/docs/2016\\_CEQA\\_Statutes\\_and\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/docs/2016_CEQA_Statutes_and_Guidelines.pdf)

**Agency(ies) contacted:**

- Not applicable. The Applicant indicates preliminary coordination with Solano County to take CEQA lead agency status.

**Adequacy of Information**

The application materials are generally complete with respect to CEQA compliance information as noted below:

- In Attachment 1 (Application Form), the Applicant indicates that the proposed activities are a “project” as defined by CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21065 and 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15378). In Attachment 8 (CEQA Compliance Form), in the response to the Items 6 and 7, the Applicant indicates that Solano County would take CEQA Lead Agency status and that it has determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration (likely supported by an Initial Study) would be required. The Applicant further explains that only after the grant has been awarded that they would begin the CEQA process and permitting process (i.e., a Conditional Use Permit). As such, the Lead Agency cannot start CEQA documentation until they receive the permit application. According to the Applicant, Jim Leland, Principal Planner for Solano County, has indicated that the CEQA process for a Mitigated Negative Declaration and permitting process Conditional Use Permit should only take a few months to complete.
- Based on information provided above, CEQA compliance and discretionary approval of the project by Solano County are not included within Attachment 6 (Scope of Work) or Attachment 6A (Project Schedule). We concur that completion of the CEQA process (Mitigated Negative Declaration) and discretionary approval of the project by Solano County (issuance of a Conditional Use Permit) could be completed within a few months. An MND process usually takes a minimum of 2-3 months, and the Applicant indicates in Attachment 8 that the MND would be adopted by Feb-March 2018.

We recommend that the Applicant incorporate the CEQA process and discretionary approval of the project by Solano County within their overall schedule to ensure that the procedural aspects of the CEQA environmental review process and the project Solano County Conditional Use Permit are completed in a timely manner consistent with the overall project schedule.

**Accuracy of Information**

The Applicant indicates that it has started coordination with Solano County with respect to CEQA compliance.

**Conclusion**

Our review did not identify any major concerns regarding CEQA compliance or that would affect the proposed project schedule or budget. We recommend clarification of CEQA compliance and permitting of the project by Solano County within their overall project schedule.