

## **Appendix G**

### **Interagency / Scoping Meeting Materials and Scoping Meeting Sign-in Sheets**

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# South Dakota PrairieWinds Project Environmental Impact Statement

## The NEPA Process

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared under the direction of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Western Area Power Administration (Western) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service (RUS) for the South Dakota PrairieWinds Project . The project proponent seeks an interconnection with Western and financing from RUS, and thus an EIS will be developed in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and agencies' implementing regulations.

Public involvement is part of the NEPA environmental review process. The public participation effort focuses on providing information to and gathering input from the public. You will have numerous opportunities to participate in the decision-making process as shown on the figure to the right.

## How you can participate

- Attend a public meeting. The meeting will provide the opportunity to ask questions, express concern, and submit written comments.
- Participate and provide comments during scoping as well as during the public review of the EIS. The availability of the Draft EIS and Final EIS will be announced. If requested, you will be provided the Draft EIS and Final EIS for review when completed.
- Designate on a comment form that you would like to be kept informed of the ongoing progress of this project and be included on the mailing list.



For more information on the proposed project:

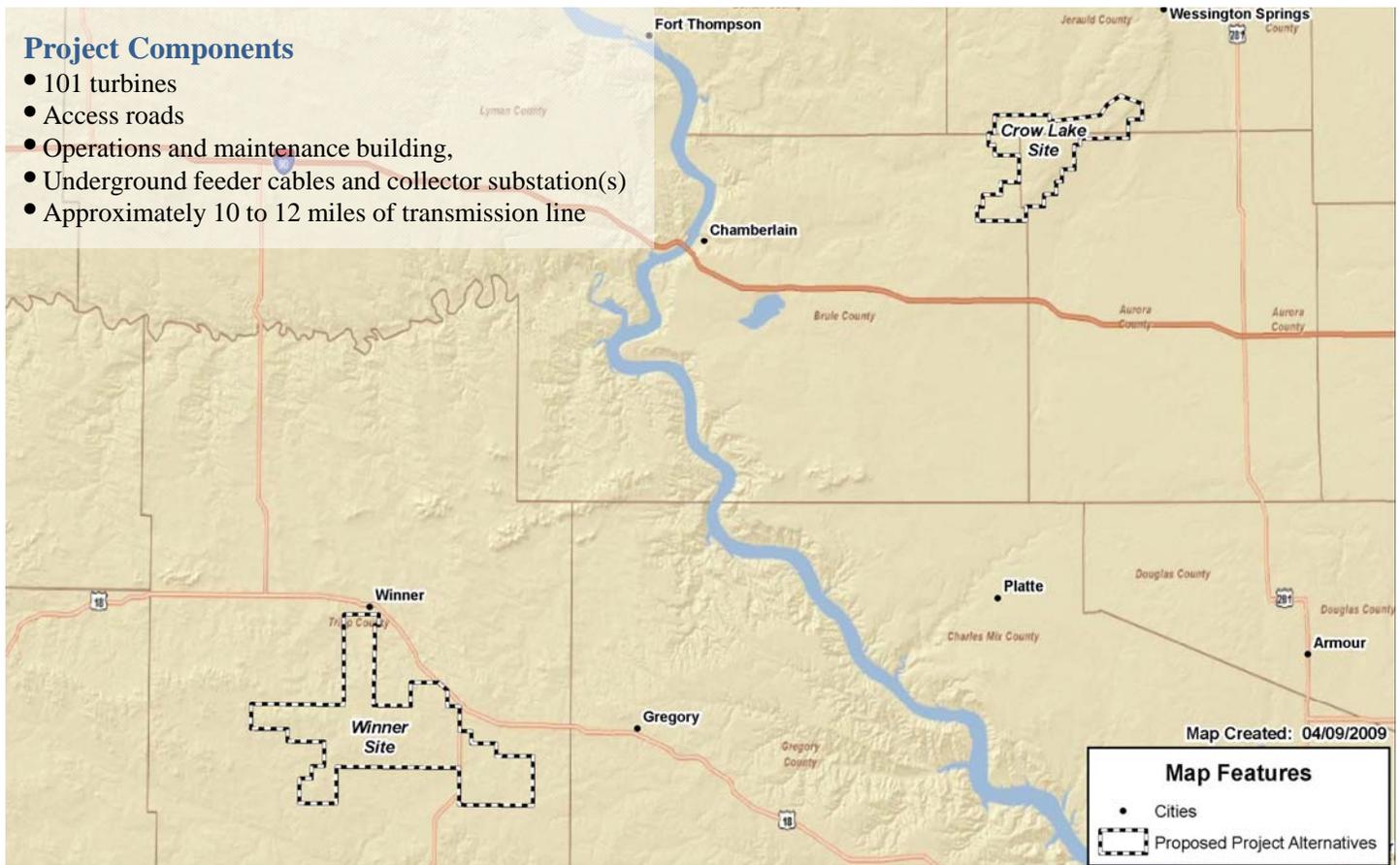
Call the Project Phone Number: (800) 336-7288

Send an e-mail to the Project E-mail: [sdprairiewinds@wapa.gov](mailto:sdprairiewinds@wapa.gov)

Visit the Project Website: <http://www.wapa.gov/sdprairiewinds.htm>

## Project Components

- 101 turbines
- Access roads
- Operations and maintenance building,
- Underground feeder cables and collector substation(s)
- Approximately 10 to 12 miles of transmission line



## Project Description

PrairieWinds SD1, Inc. (PrairieWinds), a wholly owned subsidiary of Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric), is proposing to construct a new 151.5-megawatt (MW) wind energy facility at one of two locations in south-central South Dakota (see map to the right). Project components would include:

Power from the facility would be supplied to Basin Electric's customers through an interconnection with Western's transmission system. RUS is considering financing the project. Once environmental permitting is complete, and if the agency decisions are to go forward with the project, construction would begin Fall 2010/Winter 2010. Facility commercial operation is anticipated to begin in late 2010 or early 2011.

## Project Purpose and Need

Incentives and regulations to encourage or require the generation of power from renewable or low environmental impact resources are being actively considered and/or implemented within the Basin Electric member service areas. A number of proposals for national Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS) are pending in Congress.

**Basin Electric's Participation:** With members in nine states, Basin Electric recognizes the need for additional renewable energy capacity to service forecasted member load growth demands and to meet state mandated RPS. A 151.5-MW wind energy facility was determined to be the least-cost renewable resource option to satisfy these requirements.

**PrairieWinds's Participation:** A subsidiary of Basin Electric, and the project applicant. To be the owner and operator of the proposed project.

**RUS's Participation:** Co-lead agency for the EIS process, providing oversight of the NEPA process and preparation of the EIS. They are also considering granting financing assistance.

**Western's Participation:** Co-lead agency for the EIS process, providing oversight of the NEPA process and preparation of the EIS. They are also considering approval of an interconnection request.

*Note, that consultation is occurring and Native American Tribes and agencies with jurisdiction or special expertise have been invited to be cooperating agencies*



## South Dakota PrairieWinds Project Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Process

### What is Scoping?

The Council on Environmental Quality's scoping definition (Sec. 1501.7) states:

*There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. This process shall be termed scoping.*

Scoping is the process by which Federal agencies invite other agencies, organizations, and the public to provide input on the scope of a project. More specifically, it is the process that Federal agencies utilize to get input on the issues and effects related to a proposed action and alternatives. The items identified are then addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS is addressed in accordance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and agencies' implementing regulations.

### Scoping and the South Dakota PrairieWinds Project:

Western Area Power Administration (Western), an agency within the U.S. Department of Energy; Rural Utilities Service (RUS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); are conducting scoping for the proposed South Dakota PrairieWinds Project. Throughout the scoping period, written comments may be submitted to the address below. As a part of the scoping process, two scoping meetings are being held for this project. At these meetings, Western, RUS and PrairieWinds SD1, Inc. (PrairieWinds, the Applicant) representatives will be available for one-on-one discussions, to provide information about the proposed project, answer questions, and take verbal and written comments from interested parties.

### Ways to Provide Comments:

We would appreciate any comments you have concerning the proposed project. We would like to ensure that important environmental concerns are addressed and that natural resources and places of interest within the project area are considered in the EIS. Comments on the project scope and alternatives should be received by **May 15, 2009**, to be considered in defining the scope for the Draft EIS. This is not your only opportunity to submit comments on the EIS. There will be additional opportunities for the public to provide input during the development of the EIS. Comments could be submitted through the project's web address, or sent by letter, fax or e-mail. Written comments on the scope of the EIS should be addressed to **Ms. Liana Reilly**, at the address listed below.

Ms. Liana Reilly  
Document Manager  
Western Area Power Administration  
Corporate Services Office, A7400  
P.O. Box 281213  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-8213  
Fax: (720) 962-7263

**Call the Project Phone Number: (800) 336-7288**  
**Send an e-mail to the Project E-mail: [sdprairiewinds@wapa.gov](mailto:sdprairiewinds@wapa.gov)**

**Visit the Project Website: <http://www.wapa.gov/sdprairiewinds.htm>**

### How to Receive Additional Information:

For more information about the project, or if you would like to be included on the Project mailing list and/or to receive copies of the Draft and Final EIS, please provide your contact information to Ms. Liana Reilly, at the address above. For information on RUS financing please contact Mr. Dennis Rankin, Project Manager, Engineering and Environmental Staff, Rural Utilities Service, Utilities Program, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Mail Stop 1571 Washington D.C. 20250-1571 telephone: (202) 720-1953, fax: (202) 720-0820 or e-mail: [dennis.rankin@wdc.usda.gov](mailto:dennis.rankin@wdc.usda.gov).

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**Please fold in thirds and staple**

Affix  
postage  
here

Ms. Liana Reilly  
Western Area Power Administration  
Corporate Services Office, A7400  
P.O. Box 281213  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228-8213

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analysis

alternatives

better decisions

environmental protection

public participation

# National Environmental Policy Act

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) prepared this brochure to encourage and help you to participate in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. All Federal agencies must comply with NEPA, but their procedures vary. This brochure describes DOE's NEPA process, focusing on your role in DOE's preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EISs).

## What is NEPA?

NEPA is a Federal law that serves as the Nation's basic charter for environmental protection. It requires that all Federal agencies consider the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions. NEPA promotes better agency decisionmaking by ensuring that high quality environmental information is available to agency officials and the public before the agency decides whether and how to undertake a major Federal action. Through the NEPA process, you have an opportunity to learn about DOE's proposed actions and to provide timely information and comments to DOE.

To implement NEPA, all Federal agencies follow procedures issued by the President's Council on Environmental Quality in the Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). DOE also follows its own supplementary procedures, found in 10 CFR Part 1021.

## How Does DOE Prepare an EIS?

The EIS process consists of several steps, each with opportunities for you to be involved.

- **Notice of Intent.** First, DOE publishes a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS in the *Federal Register* and makes local announcements. This notice states the need for action and provides preliminary information on the EIS scope, including the

alternative actions to be evaluated, the kinds of potential environmental impacts to be analyzed, and related issues. The Notice of Intent also serves as the beginning of the next step, the "scoping process."

**TIP:** The Notice of Intent explains how you can participate in the scoping process and provides information about dates and locations of public meetings.

- **Scoping Process.** DOE requests your comments on the scope of the EIS. What alternatives should be evaluated? What potential environmental impacts should be analyzed? DOE's scoping process will last at least 30 days, with at least one public meeting.

**TIP:** During the scoping process, tell DOE what EIS information you would like to receive (e.g., a summary of the EIS or the full document on CD or on paper).

- **Draft EIS.** DOE considers scoping comments in preparing a Draft EIS. An EIS (Draft or Final) analyzes and compares the potential environmental impacts of the various alternatives, one of which is always a "no action" alternative. The EIS also discusses ways to avoid or reduce adverse impacts. A Draft EIS will identify DOE's preferred alternative(s) if known at the time.

**TIP:** DOE EIS schedules and related NEPA information are available at <http://www.eh.doe.gov/nepa>. DOE often has EIS-specific Web sites as well.

- **Public Comment on the Draft EIS.** After DOE issues a Draft EIS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* to begin the public comment period, which will last at least 45 days. DOE also will announce details regarding how you may comment on the Draft EIS, either orally at a public hearing (at least one must be held) or in writing.

**TIP:** Check your local paper, the DOE NEPA Web site (<http://www.eh.doe.gov/nepa>, click on "What's New" or "NEPA Public Participation Calendar"), or other DOE notices for information about public hearings and ways to submit comments.

- **Final EIS.** DOE considers all timely public comments on the Draft EIS in preparing the Final EIS, which must respond to such comments. The Final EIS identifies DOE's preferred alternative(s). After DOE issues the Final EIS, EPA publishes a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*.
- **Record of Decision.** DOE must wait at least 30 days after the EPA Notice of Availability of the Final EIS before issuing a Record of Decision. A Record of Decision announces and explains DOE's decision and describes any commitments for mitigating potential environmental impacts.

**TIP:** DOE publishes Records of Decision in the *Federal Register* and makes them available on the DOE NEPA Web site. You may also ask DOE to send you a copy.



## How Does NEPA Work?

Early in its planning process for a proposed action, DOE considers how to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The appropriate level of review depends on the significance (i.e., the context and intensity) of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action. There are three levels of NEPA review:

- **Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** – For major Federal actions that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment, NEPA requires preparation of an EIS. An EIS is a detailed analysis of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed action and the range of reasonable alternatives. Public participation is an important part of the EIS process.
- **Environmental Assessment (EA)** – When the need for an EIS is unclear, an agency may prepare an EA to determine whether to prepare an EIS or to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact. An EA is a brief analysis. DOE's procedures provide notification and comment opportunities for host states and tribes. DOE also may provide notification and comment opportunities for other interested people. DOE then considers any comments received, makes revisions as appropriate, and issues the EA.
- **Categorical Exclusion** – DOE's NEPA regulations list classes of actions that normally do not require an EIS or an EA because, individually or cumulatively, they do not have the potential for significant environmental impacts. Examples are information gathering activities and property transfers when the use is unchanged.

## How Can I Learn More?

We encourage you to learn more about NEPA, the EIS process, and DOE's current NEPA activities by visiting or contacting the following:

- DOE's NEPA Web site at <http://www.eh.doe.gov/nepa> – to learn about upcoming opportunities to participate in DOE's NEPA process, download DOE NEPA documents, and find requirements and guidance that DOE follows for NEPA implementation.
- DOE's Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance at 1-800-472-2756 (toll-free) – to leave a message regarding EIS-specific or general NEPA information.
- The Council on Environmental Quality's NEPAnet at <http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/nepanet.htm> – for government-wide NEPA information.



Office of NEPA  
Policy and Compliance



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# DOE, NEPA, and You

## A Guide to Public Participation

