



June 10, 2012

From: Lori Gill
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To: John Miller
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Humboldt County Department of County Development Services Planning Division

Dear John Miller,

After reviewing the proposed Humboldt County Development plan, with specific interest in the Energy Plan chapter 12, I am troubled with what appears to be inequitable requirements for energy resource development.

For example, oil & gas development are faced with a strict permit process as a prerequisite for their projects, while the plan does not specify ANY permit process for wind energy. Reading through the sections and comparing the requirements for oil & gas energy development vs. wind energy development requirements, I had a difficult time discerning what, if any, REAL restrictions will be placed on wind energy developments in Humboldt County.

The County will impose a massive paperwork request of oil & gas industry's intent to develop, including, but not limited to, having to submit a plan for everything from:

- * 12.5 E-S2(1)-D: Grading plans to minimize erosion
- * 12.5 E-S2(1)-F: Fire protection procedures
- * 12.5 E-S2(1)-I: Phasing plan for staging of development indicating an approximate timetable and production levels for project
- * 12.5 E-S2(1)-J: Procedures for abandonment and restoration of the site, which provide for removal of all equipment, and site restoration.
- * 12.5 E-S2(2) provides for a ratio of apparatus per acre for oil & gas sites
- * 12.5 E-S4 (A) calls for avoiding placing oil & gas sites on active faults or other geologically unstable areas.
- E-S5 Electrical Transmission Lines sections C & D set requirements for ETL to be placed in a manner so as to infringe on the view shed as minimally as possible.
- * 12.5 E-S3 Wind Generating Facilities section is very short, and contains no specific restrictions, yet vague references to wind projects not being detrimental to public safety, health, convenience, and welfare. The plan also mentions that within the coastal zones the wind project "will not have a significant adverse effect on coastal resources, including wildlife qualities", and they may not damage or prejudice other property in the vicinity. **Short...and sweet, indeed.**

Oil & gas development will be required to supply plans for development and maintenance of their sites for safety, scenic purposes, restoration, etc., just to obtain a permit. Electrical Transmission Lines must comply with some restrictions with regards to preserving the view shed. One would think that at the very least, the issue of protecting and preservation the view shed would have been included in wind energy requirements, as their intended location in the Lost Coast will severely impact the view shed, yet nothing of the sort exists for wind energy.

In contrast, wind energy development does not face these same restrictions or any apparent restrictive mechanisms in this plan. In fact, this plan does not state that a permit is even required to move forward with installation of wind energy apparatuses.

Furthermore, there is no provision in this plan for other alternative types of energy, nuclear, wave, river, etc. This version of a proposed plan is at best incomplete, and at worst extremely biased in favor of wind energy.

This plan needs to be revised, to be completed, to be especially careful of what is allowed, monitored, etc., in order to protect our homes, environments, and very way of life. With respect to wind energy, we are talking about 25 windmills (just a start for a wind farm) that are 400ft tall in a pristine area that is geologically unstable at best. Their production of energy is not a constant, so to add this inconsistent energy to our grid will allow the PG&E plant to power down somewhat while assuming the wind energy. While it is a desirable goal to wind down our power plants, it also creates a certain instability in the power market, in that when the windmills produce less energy, public demand is still at the same levels, those power plants are not able to ramp up the power quickly, and this results in power losses.

The truth is that California is littered with wind farms already. The truth is that many of these giants sit motionless, nothing more than a scar on the view shed they tower over, with some fallen mills littering the ground--never to be picked up, only to rot SLOWLY away. The truth is that wind energy cannot be stored. The truth is that with a state full of windmills we continue to pay very high prices for power. The truth is that with a state full of windmills we still have rolling blackouts in the metropolitan areas during peak usage periods. The truth is that with a state full of windmills we still have heavy pollution in and around our major metropolitan areas, and the Sacramento & San Joaquin valley.

So California has thousands of windmills already, yet we the people have seen very little benefit, if any at all. What benefits would the people of Humboldt County have as a direct result of the Bear River Wind Energy Project that the rest of Californians have missed out on? Will Humboldt County residents see a decrease in their power bills? Will the wind farm provide Ferndale residents with a backup power source? Why is this proposed plan deficient of checks and balances for wind energy, yet hold other energy source development to such strict requirements/standards? It has been a very long time since the Humboldt County Development Plan has been updated; shouldn't the process be considerate of what is best for Humboldt County instead of merely glossing it over and ending up stuck with a flock of towering useless eyesores?

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your response to my questions.

Sincerely,
Lori Gill