

Public Notice of Availability of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report: Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Repowering

Project Title: Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Repowering

Project Location – Specific: North and south of I-580, south of the Alameda/Contra Costa County border, west of the Alameda/San Joaquin County border, and

Project Location – County: Alameda County

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Program:

The program that is the subject of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (DPEIR) is the anticipated approval by Alameda County of new Conditional Use Permits (CUPs) to allow new wind-farm uses in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (APWRA), as permitted by both the East County Area Plan (ECAP) and the County Zoning Ordinance. Windfarm uses are conditionally permitted in the “A” (Agriculture) zone district, which encompasses the entire program area, and in areas designated under the ECAP as Large Parcel Agriculture (LPA), which applies to almost all of the program area. As a Program PEIR, this document analyzes a series of actions that are related geographically and that are likely to have similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways (see State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168[a]). The series of actions—anticipated approvals of a series of CUPs—will result in progressive repowering of the APWRA: decommissioning of existing old-generation turbines, installation of new turbines, and operation for the expected life of the new turbines under a 30-year permit and conditions of approval that include implementation of the identified mitigation measures. When approving new CUPs for repowering, the County intends to facilitate such repowering projects through reliance on the mitigation measures contained in this PEIR as uniform standards where appropriate and by tiering from this PEIR to provide a framework for focused, project-level analysis.

The Program EIR includes project-level analysis of two specific repowering projects (applications for conditional use permits), for the Golden Hills Wind Project - Phase 1, and for the Patterson Pass Wind Project. This level of analysis will enable the East County Board of Zoning Adjustments to approve the subject windfarm CUP applications.

The Golden Hills Wind Project (Golden Hills Project, Phase 1), proposed by Golden Hills Wind, LLC (a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC), would decommission and remove 775 existing wind turbines on the site, install up to 52 new 1.7 MW GE turbines, make improvements to related infrastructure, and yield a nameplate capacity of 88.4 MW. The Project site encompasses 38 separate parcels on more than 4,500 acres, on which there are seven CUPs currently in effect.

The Patterson Pass Wind Project is proposed by Patterson Pass Wind Farm, LLC, an operating subsidiary of EDF Renewable Energy (EDF RE, formerly EnXco, Inc.), and would entail repowering of its existing 21.8 MW windfarm. The existing windfarm originally comprised 336 Nordtank and Bonus 65 kW turbines, of which 317 turbines remain operational. The repowered project would consist of 8–12 turbines with a total nameplate capacity of 19.8 MW. The site consists of three parcels encompassing 952 acres.

The County’s objectives are to serve the public and market need for electrical energy, the public policy need to produce renewable energy, and the widely-held public and regulatory agency need to substantially reduce avian mortality related to wind turbine operations. The goals of the applicants are to repower their windfarm assets in compliance with the existing CUPs and applicable laws, reduce avian mortality, and meet state and County goals for production of renewable energy.

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Lead Agency: Alameda County, Community Development Agency, Planning Department

Significant Environmental Effects Anticipated from Program Implementation

The repowering activities associated with the program and the Projects are expected to result in the following impacts, that with the exception of the first three, can be avoided or reduced to less than significant levels with identified mitigation measures:

- Significant and unavoidable temporary air quality effects due to emission of reactive organic gases and nitrogen oxides during construction in excess of air district standards.
- Significant and unavoidable adverse impacts on biological resources, due to mortality of raptors, other birds, and bats migrating through and wintering in the program area.
- Significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts on traffic operation, safety hazards, emergency access, and bicycle facilities if they take place concurrently with construction of the Sand Hill Repowering Project, which is anticipated to result in similar traffic impacts.
- Significant visual impacts on scenic vistas, scenic highways, visual character, light and glare related to shadow flicker, and conformity to state and local policies on visual resources.
- Potential conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance under the program, although not for the individual proposed Projects.
- Other air quality impacts during construction due to dust and equipment emissions.
- Conflict with applicable plans, policies and/or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, on a temporary basis due to construction.
- Other impacts on biological resources, including special-status plants, a wide range of terrestrial species, habitat communities, migratory wildlife corridors and nursery sites.
- Potential adverse changes to the significance of historical, archaeological or paleontological resources, or disturbance of human remains, including those not interred in formal cemeteries.
- Expose people or structures to potential property loss, injury or death, as a result of rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismically-induced ground shaking, ground failure, landsliding, liquefaction or expansive soil conditions.
- Ground disturbance on sites designated as containing hazardous materials, resulting in a hazard to the public or the environment.
- Location within an airport land use plan area or within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, resulting in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the area, for the program.
- Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.
- Potential violations of specific water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, alteration of streams with the possibility of substantial erosion or siltation, or flooding due to increases in the rate or amount of surface runoff, or potential other sources of polluted runoff.
- Potentially significant exposure of residences to noise from new wind turbines, and noise from decommissioning and new construction activities.
- Conflict with applicable plans, policies and/or regulations regarding performance standards for the circulation system, including transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, or increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses.

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Addresses Where Copy of PEIR is Available:

The DPEIR is available for review during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday, at the Alameda County Community Development Agency, Planning Department, at 224 West Winton Avenue, Room 111, Hayward, California, 94544. The DPEIR is also available for viewing at the following public libraries:

OAKLAND MAIN LIBRARY

125 14th St.
Oakland, CA 94612
510-238-3134

CASTRO VALLEY LIBRARY

3600 Norbridge Avenue
Castro Valley, CA 94546
510-667-7900

FREMONT MAIN LIBRARY

2400 Stevenson Blvd
Fremont, CA 94538
510-745-1400

TRACY PUBLIC LIBRARY

20 E Eaton Ave.
Tracy, CA 95376
209-937-8221

DUBLIN LIBRARY

200 Civic Plaza
Dublin, CA 94568
925-803-7252

LIVERMORE PUBLIC LIBRARY

1188 South Livermore Avenue
Livermore, CA 94550-9315
925-373-5500

PLEASANTON LIBRARY

400 Old Bernal Ave.
Pleasanton, CA 94566
925-931-3400

The DEIR is also available for review or download at the Alameda County website (www.acgov.org/cda/planning —select “Pending Land Use Projects” - “Current Development Projects” - “Wind Turbine Projects” and “APWRA Repowering – Program Environmental Impact Report”), and at the website of the Altamont Pass SRC (www.altamontsrc.org).

Review Period: June 6, 2014 to July 21, 2014

Contact Person: Comments on this draft PEIR are due to the County no later than 5 p.m. on July 21, 2014, and can be forwarded by any of the following methods.

Mail: Sandra Rivera
Assistant Planning Director
224 W. Winton, Room 111
Hayward, CA 94544

Email: Sandra.Rivera@acgov.org

Fax: 510-785-8793

A public hearing will be held at 1:30 p.m. on June 26, 2014, at a meeting of the East County Board of Zoning Adjustments, in the City of Pleasanton Council Chambers, 200 Old Bernal Avenue, Pleasanton. Comments on the Draft PEIR will be received during the regularly scheduled meeting.

Authority cited: Section 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 21092, 21152, and 21153, Public Resources Code.
Revised 2005