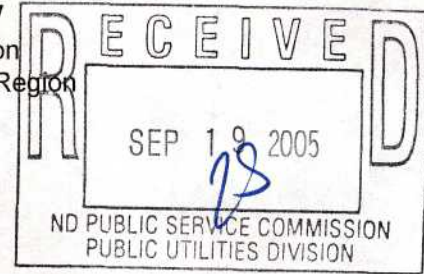




Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
Upper Great Plains Customer Service Region
P.O. Box 35800
Billings, MT 59107-5800



SEP 13 2005

Dear Interested Party:

Basin Electric Power Cooperative has applied to the Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration (Western) to interconnect the Burleigh County Wind Energy Center near Wilton, North Dakota with Western's existing Garrison-Bismarck 230-kV Transmission Line. The enclosed finding of no significant impact (FONSI) includes a summary of the project, alternatives, associated impacts, as described in the environmental assessment (EA), and findings.

The Proposed Action in the EA is broken into two phases. Phase I of the Proposed Action would include construction of the initial 33 turbines, collection lines (sub-transmission lines), collector substation, 230-kilovolt (kV) high-voltage transmission line, temporary tap, a permanent switching station, and access roads associated with these facilities. Construction for Phase I is scheduled to be complete by December 2005. The enclosed FONSI is applicable only to Phase I.

Phase II of the Proposed Action would include construction of the additional 33 turbines and associated collection lines and access roads to serve these facilities. Construction for Phase II is scheduled for a later date, most likely within 12 months of completion of Phase I.

Under Phase II, Western will meet all additional obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and National Historic Preservation Act, including further consultations interested tribes on the protection of Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs). If Western finds that Phase II would not result in a significant impact, Western would prepare an additional FONSI.

If you haven't already requested it, the EA is available. To request an electronic or hard copy, please contact Catherine Cunningham, NEPA Document Manager, Western Area Power Administration, P.O. Box 281213, Lakewood, CO 80228-8213, (720) 962-7260, Fax: (720) 962-7263, email cunningh@wapa.gov.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Cunningham or Ted Anderson at (406) 247-7385.

Respectfully,

Nicholas J. Stas
Environmental Manager

Enclosure