

MINUTES

HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 08, 2023

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Barbieri, Vice Chairman Furniss, Representatives Vander Woude, Horman, Scott, Young, Wisniewski, Raybould, Allgood, Bundy, Lambert, Mickelsen, Redman, Wheeler, Chew, Necochea, Rubel

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative Rubel

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Barbieri called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Redman** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2023 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Amy Schutte, Communications Director for Magic Valley Energy, presented an overview of the need for wind energy in Idaho and the Lava Ridge Wind Project. She noted the importance of clean energy goals in the integrated resource plans of PacifiCorp and Idaho Power, explaining that wind power is a growth industry totalling 16 percent of Idaho's electricity usage. Ms. Schutte advised the Committee of the demand for clean energy among Idaho businesses.

Luke Papez, Senior Project Developer for Magic Valley Energy, provided an overview of the draft environmental impact statement and a time line of the public comment process. Mr. Papez explained the alternative geographic proposals for the wind project, noting the alternatives preferred by the Bureau of Land Management [BLM]. Mr. Papez introduced **David Tuthill** and **Jack Alexander**.

David Tuthill, Idaho Water Engineering, explained the Lava Ridge Wind Project would not impact draw down on the aquifer and the project's water use equates to 0.03 percent of all irrigated acres in three county areas for two years.

Jack Alexander, Synergy Resource Solutions, noted the project adds infrastructure to preserve grazing access. He advised the new infrastructure will include troughs and fences.

Luke Papez explained Magic Valley Energy's commitment to preserving the condition of all project roads, to protecting local wildlife and to preserving the Minidoka National Historic Site. He advised Committee members of the positive economic impacts of the project. Mr. Papez stated passing **HCR 4** sets a dangerous precedent for Idaho industries.

In response to questions from Committee members, **Mr. Papez** stated the local counties have signed on as cooperating agencies to the BLM's process. He noted the involvement of multiple levels of government, from local to federal. Mr. Papez noted there is currently no contract for the sale of the power, advising there is need for the power across the West. He noted that evaluations to determine the impact of turbine locations in relation to airspace were ongoing. Mr. Papez advised that the BLM had assessed the region's ability to house workers employed during the construction of the project. Mr. Papez stated the \$4 million of ongoing tax revenue is based on the revenue and projects of Magic Valley Energy, advising as the project grew so would tax revenue. He explained a reclamation plan had been submitted by Magic Valley Energy. Mr. Papez noted Magic Valley Energy was in receipt of a federal tax credit for its wind power production. He explained the history of Magic Valley Energy, noting the companies American origin.

HCR 4:

Rep. Nelsen presented **HCR 4**, a House Concurrent Resolution to support a no-build option on the proposed Lava Ridge Wind Project. He noted broad local opposition to the project, advising the Committee of the negative agricultural and economic impacts of the proposed project. Rep. Nelsen noted the support of all legislators from the Magic Valley area and numerous local County Commissioners for **HCR 4**. Rep. Nelsen advised members the consultation with Magic Valley residents has been inadequate. He noted the opposition of local highway districts to the Lava Ridge Wind Project, and questioned the longevity of the number of jobs the project was expected to create. He noted this project would be the largest in the continental United States, with hundreds of turbines.

Rep. Clow noted the lack of long term jobs created by the project.

Those speaking **in support** were **Dean Diamond**, citizen; **Brian Olmstead**, citizen; **Mark Doerr**, citizen; **Nicki Kroese**, citizen; **Janet Keegan**, Friends of Minnidoka; **Joan Hurlock**, citizen; **Matt Bridges**, citizen; **John Steiner**, citizen; **Don Hall**, Twin Falls County; **Marilyn Borek**, citizen; **Kristina Reininger**, citizen; **Sauna Robinson**, citizen; and **Jerry Holton**, citizen; and **David Lehman**, Idaho Agricultural Aviation Association; **Dr. John Hannowell**, citizen; **Lyle Johnstone**, citizen; and **Julie DeWolfe Arroyo**, citizen. They were of the opinion that **HCR 4** was right to support a no build option because of the project's impact on the Minidoka National Historic Site, and questioned the accuracy of the environmental impact statement. They also expressed concerned about the aviation safety impact of the project.

Those speaking **in opposition** were **Peter Richardson**, Idaho Energy Freedom; **Brad Mitchell**, Group; **Ron Williams**, LS Power and; **Roy Prescott**, citizen. They were of the opinion that **HCR 4** was wrong to support a no-build option, as they were of the opinion that the Lava Ridge Wind Project would provide affordable energy, strengthen the economy of Southern Idaho and felt concerns about the project were based on fear. They felt adoption of **HCR 4** would indicate clean energy development was not supported in Idaho.

MOTION:

Rep. Scott made a motion to send **HCR 4** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Neslen** will sponsor the resolution on the floor.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Representative Barbieri
Chair

Jeremy Collier
Secretary