



Virginia company proposing wind farm visible from Barstow

Project to include 33 turbines

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BARSTOW • Thirty-three wind turbines could be sprouting up on 1,957 acres of public and private land about six miles southeast of Barstow. The turbines could be visible from within Barstow city limits and from Barstow Road, according to a representative from the company proposing the wind farm.

AES Wind Generation, a Virginia-based company, plans to build the 82.5 megawatt wind farm — enough to power about 60,000 homes — on about 1,577 acres of land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and 380 acres of private land. The wind turbines will produce about 2.5 megawatts each and will be about 30 percent larger than the wind turbine on the Marine Corps Logistics Base, according to Michael Azeka, director of planning and permitting for AES Wind Generation.

The AES Daggett Ridge wind farm was recognized by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar in November as being one of six renewable energy projects likely to begin construction by Dec. 31, 2010 — a requirement to qualify for federal stimulus dollars. The cost of the project hasn't been publicly disclosed yet, Azeka said. The number of jobs the project could create will be addressed in the environmental impact report, currently being developed by the BLM.

Much of the project will be blocked from view from city limits by hills in the area, but Azeka said residents will be able to see parts of the farm a few places within Barstow. People driving south on Barstow Road will also be able to see the wind turbines, he said.

Also included with the construction of the wind turbines will be about 10 miles of new roads as well as a power substation, according to the BLM.

Even though a public meeting on the company's notice of intent to file an environmental impact report was held, Dec. 16, David Briery, BLM spokesman, said public comment would resume once the report was in. Public comment on the company's notice of intent let the BLM know what it should focus on when conducting environmental studies for the wind farm.

Concerns raised at the public meeting included the proposed wind farm's affect on property values, and its visual impact, Azeka said. However, compared to the Granite Mountain Wind project, a 73 megawatt wind farm proposed by RES North America near Apple Valley, very few people actually live near AES's proposed wind farm, he said.

“(Granite Mountain Wind) had a lot of people very concerned about it because there were a lot of homes nearby,” he said. “(AES Daggett Ridge) only has one house on the north and one house on the west.”

AES Wind Generation has been working on the Daggett Ridge farm since about 2005, Azeka said.

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