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*Comment Received From: Stephen Allen Fitch  
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## **Fire Behavior Officer-Planning Section Chief Review**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

## **Scoping Statement of a Fire Behavior Officer and Planning Section Chief to CEC staff on the Fountain Wind Project concerning Air Attack in the Project**

You must have **all** the tools available to fight fire in these fuels and terrain or this project will be a design for disaster for the surrounding communities, homesteads and firefighters. The proponent's "experts" in the original proposal were correct when they wrote "**....there will be a reduction in available airspace for fix-wing aircraft....and rotary-winged aircraft.**" So I looked carefully at the current proposal down to 48 Turbines still on the major ridge tops with shaded fuel breaks and dip tanks etc and still consider it very very unwise.

This is based on my experience serving on forest fires across the Nation as a type 1 (large fire) Planning Section Chief, type 1 Fire Behavior officer, 15yr. instructor at the National Advance Fire Academy, responsible for the largest Air Attack base in California, serving on the team that 1st tested the Incident Command System used on all fires today, and as a board member of the Shasta County Fire Safe Council.

On the question of whether or not air attack can be used in and around this **revised** proposal. The answer is still ABSOLUTELY NOT.

This is not based on the suggestions of the proponent's new paid advisors. "Their dog won't hunt" to use an old southern phrase meaning something won't fulfill its intended purpose, or a plan or scheme will fail. We all should rely Instead on the advice and admonition now for the 3rd time, from **front line**, unpaid, highly experienced, air attack pilots who have everything **including their lives** in this "hunt"/fight.

One thing I learned/taught was to always listen to the folks who are on the **front line**. In most cases during the fire season, this close to the

Redding Air Attack base, the front line includes air on initial attack and then air attack AND on ground units. (All the tools)

Air attack pilot Jim Barnes who was based at Redding testified at a previous hearing that he has been **“first in”** on fires in this same area. They, the **National Associated Air Attack chairman Dave Wardall and past chair Jim Barnes, came** some distance to the **scoping meeting**. They appeared before the Planning Commission , the Board of Supervisors and now **you** at their cost.

You have heard from front line pilots in a Docketed letter several months ago, and now on this proposal at the Scoping Meeting this past week. These front line experts, with thousands of hours risking their lives have explained **“we don’t fly inside wind farms,”** (Pilot Jim Barnes) and the past Deputy Chief of all CalFire air tanker operations for 34 yrs, (Chief Wardall). **“I urge you to consider that flying heavily laden aircraft (Fixed or Rotor wing) with poor visibility from smoke and very tall obstructions with whirling, immense blades is a prescription for a fatal accident both in the air and on the ground .”** He started to explain at the scoping meeting the **Vortex** effect of these giant blades for miles but was cut off at 2min. He sent through docketing the rest of the story. **Please READ it. This alone should end the consideration of Air Attack in this proposal.**

These pilots were joined by Mark Baird in the pilots Docketed letter about their concerns when they heard of the new proposal. Mark has over 23,000 hours flying his supertanker around the world including wind farm areas. Recently Mark flew next door to the Fountain Wind Project on the Dixie fire (largest fire in Ca. history). He essentially saved the town of Hat Creek and attacked several other fires near communities in Shasta County that, without his flights, could have been lost.

He said (**and we all need to listen**)—

The new fire improvements proposed-by the proponent **“would be rendered useless by the turbines.”**

Mark goes on to state “(Fountain Wind Project) and The communities near the development would be **“indefensible by air assets.”**

Let me add as a former Planning Section Chief—No Planning Section Chief (who lay the plan of action for each fire operational period) in their right mind would commit air attack in a field of turbines AND would never commit ground troops in these flashy fuels in a growing fire front without Air Support. This is nuts!

Your staff are confronted in this proposal with life or death decisions- Lives of the pilots, fire fighters and communities.

I certainly hope you listen carefully to the people who’s safety is most affected.

**Stephen Fitch 11/30/23**  
**530-604-6073**  
**svfitches@yahoo.com**