

DOCKETED

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Opposition to Fountain Wind CEC Docket 23-OPT-01 Dec 4, 2023

please see attached letter from today, Dec 4, 2023, in opposition to Fountain Wind based on numerous facts and reasons.

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

To: California Energy Commission (CEC)

Re: Opposition to Fountain Wind and potentially overriding local government decisions and community input, Docket# 23-OPT-01

Date: December 4, 2023

Dear California Energy Commission decision-makers

This letter is in opposition to the re-proposed Fountain Wind project via CEC and potentially overriding local government decisions rejecting the project and community input in opposition. The Shasta County Planning Commission denied a Use Permit for Fountain Wind by a unanimous vote of 5-0 after years of review, public comment, analysis and deliberation.

In denying Use Permit 16-007, the local Planning Commission made the following findings of fact:

“The establishment, operation and maintenance of the subject use, under the circumstances of the particular case will be detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood or will be detrimental or injurious to property or improvements in the neighborhood or to the general welfare of the County.”

The Planning Commission denied Use Permit 16-007 due to a number of significant and unavoidable issues raised both in the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and in public testimony during the special meeting in June, 2021, as well as comprehensive reviews of the Draft EIR along with public testimony, both written and oral, received over the previous 2.5 plus years....including, per the local Planning Commission minutes, “significant and unavoidable issues concerning the impacts of the project to the aesthetics of the area, impact to selected wildlife species, impact to forest resources and impacts to native American culture....and significant impact of the removal of aerial fire-fighting capability due to the location and height of the proposed structures, thus putting the communities of Round Mountain, Montgomery Creek, Moose Camp, Big Bend, and Burney into a significantly dangerous position”

...and, “looking at the long term, the financial return (to Shasta County) would be minimal.”

The Board of Supervisors also made findings of fact in addressing the appeal of the 5-0 Planning Commission Denial of User Permit for Fountain Wind. And denied the Fountain Wind Use Permit, by a 4-1 vote (80% opposed, 20% in favor)

The Federal Aviation Administration Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation dated July 1, 2021 addresses general flight paths of civilian and military aircraft and does not

address enhanced fire risks from the project nor the obstruction that dozens of wind turbines spread over hundreds to thousands of acres may cause in aerial fighting of future fires in the area by close to the ground fire-fighting helicopters or small aircraft.

The memo of ConnectGen to the Board of Supervisors dated Sept 24, 2021 makes some modest changes from the original proposal but not remotely substantive enough to change the project from being “detrimental to the health, safety, peace, morals, comfort, and general welfare of persons residing or working in the neighborhood”...etc. with significant and unavoidable issues not completely mitigable. The same holds for the revisions proposed a second time by ConnectGen in re submitting the proposal through the CEC despite local governmental denial of permit and community strong opposition on factual grounds.

Among the many significant issues, not all mentioned here, are:

1. Site selection of the proposal on forested land with active wildlife and cultural uses rather than siting such a project on already very degraded land elsewhere--or off-shore.

2. Pit River Nation’s and other local/regional indigenous leadership and members’ adamant **opposition** to desecration of sacred areas in the project area. The Pit River Nation has lived in and stewarded these and surrounding lands since time immemorial and many still live in or have deep ties to their ancestral lands in the area, despite the history of genocide, forced marches, children taken to residential boarding schools or as laborers. Areas within the Project area have been and/or are used for spiritual practices, such as ceremony, healing, prayer, fasting, burial areas, as well as hunting, gathering of edibles, materials, and medicines, and other sacred traditional uses. The Tribe attributes great significance, including spiritual significance and cultural identity, to these places.

3. Wildfires: Increases wildfire risk via: new transmission lines-- which have been a cause of wildfires in California--, turbines attract lightning, more traffic for construction, located in highest rated fire hazard zones by both Cal Fire and CPUC. Shallow soil and soil type makes lightning grounding systems more difficult and problematic. And the challenge of fighting wildfires w aircraft given the height and density of the turbine towers, nacels and blades in a forested area.

4. Water quality: construction and use of significant number of miles of new roads, significant miles of widening existing roads, blasting, soil compaction, hundreds of tons of concrete and other materials, transformer oils, herbicides usage. Run-off likely to affect local springs and waterways.

5. Biological Resources (wildlife): Impact to animal land migration corridors. Likely killing of local Bald eagles, spotted owls, raptors, migratory birds (located in “Globally Significant Avian Area”). Likely to affect various mammals due to ability to hear and use infrasound, other noise affects and shadow flicker.

6. Aesthetics: Visual pollution, obtrusive lighting (day and night) and industrialization of forest lands.

7. Public Health: shadow flicker, noise, infrasound, increased stress, including mental health impact from further degradation of cultural resources, all impacting human and community health.

For the reasons cited in this letter, I am in opposition to the Fountain Wind Project and urge you to deny the application for Docket #23-OPT-01.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Deckert, MD