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To: John Kuba, ConnectGen LLC

From: Joel Thompson – Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc. (WEST)

Subject: **CSO Surveys for the Fountain Wind Project**

SCOPE OF WORK

California Spotted Owl (CSO) Survey and Report

Protocol surveys for CSO will be conducted in suitable nesting and roosting habitats located within a 0.25-mile buffer of potential disturbance areas associated with Fountain wind Project (Project) infrastructure (e.g., roads, underground collection, turbines pads, etc.). Field surveys will align with the *Protocol for Surveying Proposed Management Activities that may Impact Northern Spotted Owls – 2012 Revision*, which is endorsed by the USFWS (2012); however, the survey area will focus on a 0.25-mi buffer of disturbance areas. The 0.25-mi buffer is consistent with NSO survey protocols for disturbance only projects and the avoidance buffers identified in the EIR released by Shasta County. Surveys will include acoustic playback of spotted owl vocalizations from fixed survey stations. Stations will be spaced such that they provide full coverage of all targeted habitat patches. Based on a review of aerial imagery within the Project area, approximately 30 survey stations will be sufficient to provide adequate survey coverage. Based on this assumption, it will take two nights for one field biologist to complete each round of surveys. Due to heavy winter snowfalls, early season spotted owl surveys throughout the region were delayed due to access limitations. For this Project, six rounds of surveys will be conducted during the June-August portion of the spotted owl survey period.

One historical activity center (AC) is present within 0.5 mi of the Project. This AC will be checked prior to initiating surveys and if occupied, all survey stations within 0.5 mi of the AC will be dropped to avoid disturbance of the resident pair. Neighboring landowners (e.g., SPI) will also be contacted to coordinate on surveys at this AC, to minimize potential disturbance to the pair. Any CSO detections will be followed-up with daytime visits, per protocol, in an attempt to determine the status of the bird (e.g., resident single, pair, floater). In addition to the daytime follow-up, the area will be surveyed at least three more times, potentially extending the number of surveys in that area beyond six, if the detection occurs during one of the last three rounds of surveys. Upon completion of the 2023 surveys, a final report will be prepared that summarizes the survey effort and results, including maps of any CSO detections.



Figure 1. Project layout (turbines and roads) in blue and associated 0.25 mi survey buffer (white buffer) for 2023 CSO surveys. **White dots are proposed survey locations. Yellow dot is the 2021 CSO nest location/activity center and yellow buffer represents a 0.5 mi buffer of the nest.**