



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR BRAD LITTLE
OFFICE OF LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR SCOTT BEDKE
OFFICE OF U.S. SENATOR MIKE CRAPO
OFFICE OF U.S. SENATOR JIM RISCH
OFFICE OF CONGRESSMAN MIKE SIMPSON

February 6, 2023

Karen Kelleher
Idaho State Director
BLM Idaho State Office
1387 South Vinnell Way
Boise, ID 83709

Dear Director Kelleher,

We are writing with concerns about the proliferation of large-scale wind and solar energy projects proposed on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land across southern Idaho, including the Lava Ridge Wind Project. Our offices have been closely monitoring these proposals, and while the State of Idaho will continue to actively protect Idaho's interests in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes, we want to be clear about Idaho's baseline position on these projects.

Idahoans cherish the concept of multiple and mixed uses on their public lands. This requires conservation, predictability of use and, most importantly, support from the local communities. These deep-rooted values are compromised by a piecemeal approach to large-scale generation projects on public lands. Dedicating hundreds of square miles of public lands to a specific use will have a long-term effect on recreation, grazing, sporting uses, and the land in general.

The Lava Ridge Wind Project, in terms of its size and scope, is the first of its kind on federally managed land in Idaho, yet the NEPA process has not adequately accounted for this fact. Our offices were informed that public outreach efforts have been insufficient to adequately engage Idaho citizens in the process. Affected farmers, ranchers, tribes, the Japanese American community, and sportsmen have voiced legitimate objections. As it stands today, the local community predominantly has not shown support for this development.

We also have serious concerns and questions about several issues surrounding the Lava Ridge Wind Project. We are concerned about the impact to existing electricity customers and the integrated resource plans of Idaho utilities.

We question whether aerial fire suppression capabilities are compromised by hundreds of 600-foot-plus tall turbines in an area prone to wildfire. Fires are one of the primary threats to greater sage-grouse, and the BLM needs to ensure neither fire nor loss of habitat compromises Idaho's Sage-grouse Management Objectives. The BLM needs to ensure that pilots can effectively suppress wildfires within and adjacent to the proposed project area.

We are also concerned that hauling large turbine blades, hubs, and towers will be detrimental to Idaho's roads and highways. Idaho has and continues to make historic investments in transportation infrastructure. The BLM needs to ensure our investments are not undone by this project and that Magic Valley Energy fully funds any damage that wind turbine components cause to the local transportation infrastructure.

The ancillary impacts are also concerning to local Idahoans. As supply chain issues continue to impact commerce in Idaho, we are concerned this project will monopolize valuable and limited resources. Specifically, we are concerned about the consequences to water supply, production and supply of concrete, project materials, as well as the labor market which already pose challenges to businesses across Idaho.

For these reasons we urge the BLM to reassess and refocus the process on working with the local communities to address the concerns outlined above. If all these concerns are not addressed, it is unlikely we will be able to support this project moving forward. Without community support, the BLM risks jeopardizing trust in government, which in turn makes future projects more challenging to accomplish.

Sincerely,



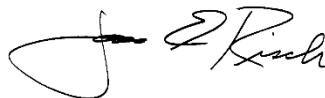
Brad Little
Governor of Idaho



Scott Bedke
Lt. Governor of Idaho



Mike Crapo
U.S. Senator



James E. Risch
U.S. Senator



Mike Simpson
U.S. Representative