

THE PROPOSED ANTELOPE RIDGE WIND FARM

The beauty of Union County will be destroyed by a 47,000 acre wind farm called Antelope Ridge Wind Farm. There will be 182 towers ranging from 470 feet to 520 feet tall located from Hot Lake to North Powder all along Craig Mountain and Ramo Flat with power lines feeding back to either the North Powder substation or the substation on Gekeler. If the power lines which are estimated to be 47 miles of overhead are connected to the Gekeler substation, then it will require crossing I84.



Craig Mountain today

This proposed wind farm is being developed by Horizon Wind that is owned by a company in Portugal/Spain, called Iberdrola.

It is being developed at the

expense taxpayers using huge tax incentives and government subsidies. For example, two of the offshore developers here in Oregon recently received \$140 million of our Stimulus Money.

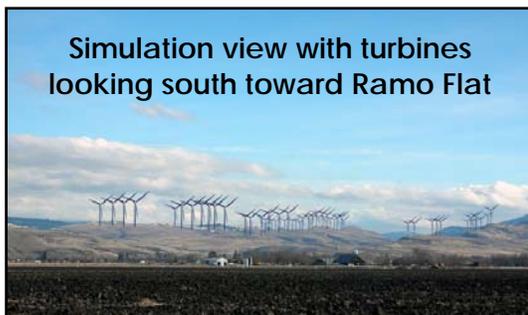
The Elkhorn Wind Farm in 2007 and 2008 received \$11 million in tax credits from the state of Oregon.

Environmental damage to Craig Mountain will be significant due to the project will require 56 miles of new roads, some up to 36' wide, removing timber and habitat. In addition, there has been 156 wetland areas identified that are part of the wildlife habitat, many of these may be destroyed or severely damaged.

The construction of the ARWF will have an impact on the

Old Oregon Trail in the Ladd Canyon area with the possibility some of the trail will be destroyed by road construction and power lines.

As the development moves up Ramo Flat, a huge amount of traffic will be forced through the city of Union for delivery of rock and other components to supply the ongoing construction which was a serious problem when Elkhorn was built.



Simulation view with turbines looking south toward Ramo Flat

The view shed of Union will be significantly damaged along with the rest of the county which will have a long term effect on population growth in the area, not to mention the serious damage to tourism and business in Union County.

Due to the construction in the area, some of the wildlife habitat will be destroyed, others will merely be driven out to other areas. In the study made at the Elkhorn project at Telocaset in 2005 preconstruction, and again in 2009, clearly indicates the big game have left the area. If this same thing happens with the Antelope project then the big game will most likely move down into Ladd Marsh or the farm land where they will have to most likely be destroyed.

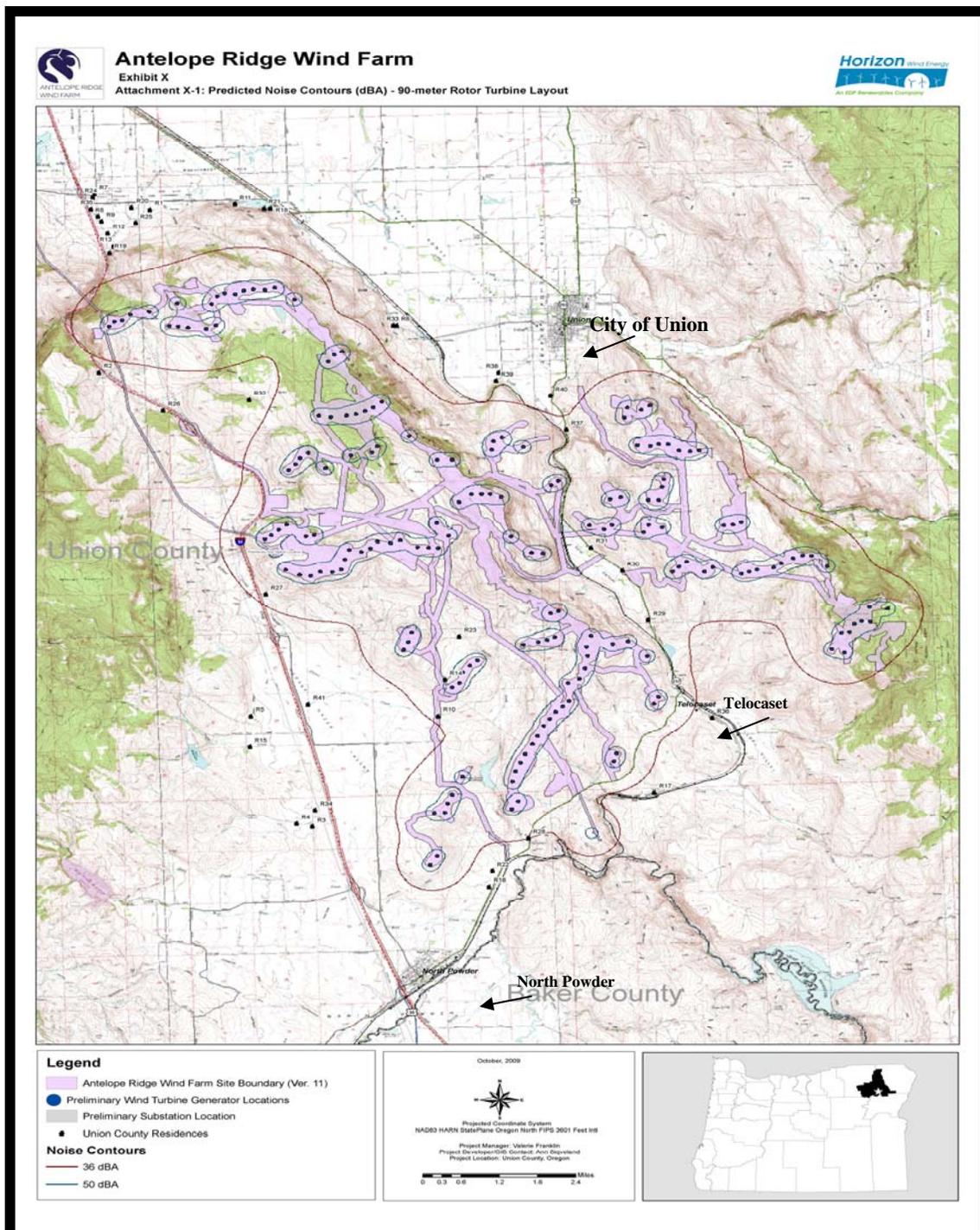


In 2009, the US Department of Treasury awarded \$546 million of the Stimulus Package to Iberdrola (a foreign company). Per the CEO of Iberdrola, they expect to receive another \$470 million in 2010. Iberdrola is the parent company of Horizon Wind and the developer of the Antelope Ridge Wind Farm.

Wind Farm Economics 101

Wind farm developers may have a strong incentive to sell off or abandon their projects once tax benefits have been captured (5-6 years for accelerated depreciation; 10 years for production tax credits), turbine performance deteriorates, and/or operating and maintenance costs escalate. Economics may dictate abandonment of individual windmills or entire wind farms before the end of land rental contracts or current estimates of the useful life of the turbines. When and if this happens, there will be no property tax revenue, jobs will disappear and landowner leases will be worthless since no revenue will be generated. Then we will all be left looking at the rusting bone yard.

The Antelope Ridge Wind Farm Proposed by Horizon Wind



182 towers erected ranging from 470 feet to 520 feet tall from Hot Lake to North Powder all along Craig Mountain and Ramo Flat and covering 47,000 acres. "Round dots" indicate the proposed tower locations.

Is Our Health in Jeopardy?

by
S. C. Smith

Is everyone allergic to bee stings or peanuts or ragweed? No. We are all “wired” differently. Our individual reactions are varied. Not all people have adverse reactions to wind turbines, their low frequency noise (LFN), the flickering of beacons, the “thumping” of their blades, etc. The range of negative health effects from wind turbines is becoming more widely acknowledged. Scientists and clinical researchers are continuing to gather data and sort through monitoring methods, as well as the types, ranges and levels of low frequency noise (LFN), and the diverse negative health problems and symptoms associated with wind turbine energy production.

The Elkhorn Wind Farm now in operation in southern Union County, Oregon has wind turbines near enough to Fay and Rod Swanson’s home to negatively impact Fay’s health.

But what was unexpected, on the night the wind turbines were revved up for the first time on December 6, 2007, was Fay’s eyes swelling shut. On that evening Fay and her husband Rod noticed particles drifting down from the wind turbines. They speculate that a coating on the blades heated up and flaked off and the now operational turbine blades were dispersing the flakes onto their property. She’d never had allergies but that was the clinic’s best guess about her eyes.



View of turbines from the Swanson’s front yard.

Fay Swanson continues to experience negative health effects from the loss of sleep, dizziness, physical pressure throughout her body, loss of focus and concentration, as well as at least one episode of bleeding from her nose, mouth and ears with no other apparent causation. Fay continues to experience several other physical ill effects which

can be attributed to Wind Turbine Syndrome. Wind turbines are about 1,500 feet from the Swanson’s property. That’s the legal allowable distance turbines have to be from a residence.

After a 5 year study on the physical effects of Wind Turbines for the University of Columbia Medical Research, Dr. Nina Pierpont, MD has published the book “Wind Turbine Syndrome.” One suggestion that Dr. Pierpont makes is that “In hilly or mountainous topographics, where valleys act as natural channels for noise ... set-back should be extended anywhere from 2-3 miles from homes.”

The effects of wind technology are not fully known and are still being researched. The Antelope Ridge Wind Farm will traverse 47,000 acres above the Grande Ronde Valley. Some of the proposed 182 wind turbines will be a little more than half a mile from the city of Union. Are you willing to be a guinea pig?

Subsidizing Foreign Companies

Bankrupt Europe has a lesson for Congress about wind power, but are they listening?

For the past 20 years the European Union had moved ahead of the US on efforts to subsidize wind power including a lucrative “Feed in Tariff.” EU governments provided government-backed securities to support utilities burdened by the Feed-in Tariff costs. But last year, as the national debt of wind-intensive EU countries became unbearable, the EU subsidy bubble burst.

Addressing a Heritage Foundation seminar last May, Dr. Gabriel Calzada, Professor of King Juan Carlos University in Madrid, explained what Feed-in Tariffs and other wind subsidies did to Spain (as well as Portugal and Greece) got into debt:

“the Feed-in Tariff...would make (utility) companies go bankrupt eventually. The government (politicians) guarantees...to give back the money in the future, when (they) are not going to be in the office any more... Right now there is a debt related to these renewable energies that nobody knows how it is going to be paid...of 16 Billion Euros (27.7 Billion US dollars).”

In early 2009 the Socialist government of Spain reduced alternative energy subsidies by 30%. At that point the whole pyramid collapsed. What to do with all this industry that has been created with subsidies that now is collapsing? The bubble is too big and Spain could not continue pumping enough money into it. The only way is finding other countries that will give taxpayers’ money away to their industry to take it and continue maintaining the industry.

That “other country” is the United States of America.

The Waxman-Markey Cap-and-Trade Bill appears to be politically dead but alternative proposals being floated by Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) and others still promise

(Continued on page 8)

HOW EFFICIENT IS WIND ENERGY?



In a study in Ontario, Canada, they found that wind output changes have shown one distinct pattern: winds tend to be calm when consumers need electricity most. Consumers use the most electricity in summer – the weakest season for wind. Winter is when power demands are the highest wherein on the coldest days, when people use the most power, wind output tends to be poorest. Over the typical day, wind output peaks around midnight and bottoms out around 8 a.m., contrary to daily consumption requirements.

It has been found that wind power all across the USA provides less than **1% of our needed electric power**. By 2025, at the current rate of wind farm development, there will be 42,000 wind towers covering 3,750 square miles, but will still **only generates 3.7% of our needs**.

Wind power construction **must be accompanied by almost equal construction of new conventional power plants**, which will be used very nearly as much as if the wind turbines were not there. In Idaho, a new natural gas plant is being built to fill the gaps when the wind does not blow. This gas plant emits very few emissions, produces 300 MW 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, consumes 10 acres where the proposed **Antelope Ridge Wind Farm will consume nearly 50,000 acres, costing double the price of the gas plant and only produce power 10-21% of the time**.

To make up the difference when the wind stops blowing, traditional power plants have to be constantly on (in spinning reserve) equal to the maximum total power of wind turbines, ready at any moment to be “ramped up” to stabilize the grid. This fluctuating backup system of spinning and ramping makes traditional power plants run inefficiently and **increases fuel consumption by at least 8-10%** compared with the steady operation of traditional power stations.

In a Wyoming study, it indicates using the coal mined for one year could produce 1.2 billion MW hours of power which would require 219,000 wind turbines consuming 19.7 million acres to equal the one year’s coal production. Coal will produce some CO² emissions, but with new technology this can be kept to a minimum, which is a far better trade-off than destroying **19.7 million acres** of our ecosystem of the USA.

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE DURING CONSTRUCTION

During construction of the Antelope Ridge Wind Farm, there will be significant environmental damage with wide roads and huge pits for each tower that are 80” x 80” feet square and up to 20 feet deep. This will require approximately 7,900 loads of gravel, tremendous amounts of concrete, 1,620 loads of wind tower components, plus all the construction equipment required to build the project.

The destructive impact that such construction would have on a mountaintop is obvious. Erosion, disruption of water flow, and destruction of wildlife habitat and plant life would continue with the presence of access roads, power lines, transformers, and the tower sites themselves. For better wind efficiency, each tower requires trees to be cleared. Vegetation would be kept down with herbicides, further poisoning the soil and water table. A site on a forested ridge would require in some cases clearing 50 to 100 acres per tower.



It is a fact that tons of CO² are generated to build a wind farm. Consider each tower includes 225 tons of steel with most of it being provided by China, the biggest polluter in the world, wherein it is shipped to Vestas for manufacturing, then shipped across the ocean to the port, where it requires 9 truckloads to get each machine to the site. To construct each tower it requires large machines to handle the steel load and unload each tower, and construct the site. From shipment of the steel to erection at the site these wind towers are handled up to eight times resulting in huge amounts of CO² emissions are generated. Wind farm developers claim wind farms cut CO² emissions, but seem to neglect to count their construction and installation.

Property Values Suffer Too. . .

In the last couple years, Canadian assessors have begun to devalue homes that are at least 1,500 feet away from the nearest turbine. In Prince Edward Island, several residents near an industrial wind farm received up to a 10% lower property value due their proximity. The assessors considered the turbines as an industrial area and devalued nearby properties accordingly. As with other easements, some claim that the impact from windmills will diminish over time. However, studies from Europe show otherwise. **In Germany, which has long had windmills, real estate agents report property value losses between 20-30% for properties in sight of wind farms.**

In 2004, the township of Lincoln in Kewaunee, Wisconsin performed its own study and found that sales within one mile of the wind farm prior to installation were 104% of the assessed values. Properties selling after the wind farm installation in the same area were at **78%** of the assessed value. The UK has reported similar impacts up to a 20% loss in value from the presence of four 360-foot tall turbines 550 yards from a new home. In most cases, environmental noise pollution will influence the bulk of the property damages. In a well-populated rural area, the total financial damage on the community will substantially exceed the public interest that will be served from the wind farm.

In Maryland, a wind farm developer demonstrated the diminution of value when it bought two abutting properties to their wind farm and were unable to sell them even close to their purchase price. They bought one property for \$104,447.50 and sold it for \$65,000. They bought another property for \$101,049.00 and shortly thereafter sold it for only \$20,000. This should prove to all wind farm developers that there is significant property value loss by wind projects. Studies have shown that fear of wind farms can negatively affect purchase prices. Loss of property value here in Union County has already occurred in Telocaset at the Elkhorn Wind Farm where a couple built a house in 2004-2005 and ended up taking a substantial loss when they sold it.



Is this what you want next to your house?

Why are they called "wind farms?" They don't grow anything. . .

Wildlife in the Balance

In a report to the Oregon Department of Energy dated December 2, 2009, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife continues to be concerned about cumulative impacts of wind turbines in the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion and now in the adjacent northern portion of the Blue Mountains Ecoregion. Cumulative impacts occur from the ever-increasing number of wind projects, along with other development, resulting in ever-increasing avian and bat fatalities, native habitat loss and fragmentation, and wildlife displacement impacts.

Greater sage-grouse are a species of concern in Oregon (listed as State Sensitive-Vulnerable in the Blue Mountains) due to its declining abundance, distribution, and productivity over the past century. Greater sage-grouse have been petitioned for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act, with a decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service scheduled for February 2010. Sage-grouse are a sagebrush-obligate species, and alterations of sagebrush habitats are the primary cause of sage-grouse population declines.

If the Greater sage-grouse becomes an endangered species, then much of the Antelope Ridge project would be changed to Category 1 land use and as a result, no wind towers would be allowed in those specified areas.

Friends of the Grande Ronde Valley

is a grassroots organization that is currently opposing the planned development of a wind farm on Craig Mountain.

Friends of the Grande Ronde Valley

Chair: Dennis Wilkinson dwilkinson@omnitrac.com
Co-Chair: Ed Martins etfineprint@yahoo.com
Secretary: Pamela Wilkinson pwilkinson@omnitrac.com
Treasurer: Linda Boettcher 541-562-5669

Committees

The following committees were formed . We need all the participation as possible since the wind company has a huge head start. Please contact the chairs to help stop these “industrial sites” from invading our county.

Legal Committee: This committee researches the information in obtaining legal counsel; what would be the benefits; what would be the costs.

Co-Chair: Tom Price interwest@wtechlink.us
541-969-8970
Co-Chair: Curtis Martin vprchnp@eoni.com
541-898-2361

Legislative Committee: This committee meets with state and local officials; arranges participation and attendance of county commissioner, siting council and special meetings in which wind power is an issue. They will address the Goal 1 and Goal 5 issues with local officials.

Chair: Phillip O'Reilly phillip@lagrandenet.com
541-910-3697

Education Committee: This committee will be in charge of educating the general public about the impacts of wind power through TV, radio, newspaper (articles, letters and community comments), and organizing an education campaign going door –to-door.

Chair: Pamela Wilkinson pwilkinson@omnitrac.com
541-568-4585

Siting Council Hospitality Committee: Organizes and facilitates the Siting Council meeting and visits to Union (to be coordinated with the Legislative Committee and the City of Union).

Chair: Pat Lang patlang49@eoni.com
541-562-9453

If you'd like to join our organization and join in stopping wind power in Union County, please contact:
Dennis Wilkinson ~ 541-568-4585
dwilkinson@omnitrac.com

The Wall Street Journal warns that “wind generation is the prime example of what can go wrong when the government decides to pick winners.”

Welfare For Billionaires

Critically important among the elements of true cost that are often understated or ignored by wind energy advocates is the huge cost of tax breaks and subsidies provided to the wind industry.

Federal, state and local government tax breaks and subsidies for wind energy have become so prevalent that it's virtually certain that the politicians and regulators who provide them have no understanding of their magnitude and cost. It's also virtually certain that they have not weighed benefits and costs. If they really have done either, there is no question but that they have decided to put the special interest of the wind industry ahead of the interest of taxpayers and electric customers who are paying for their largess.

There is no longer any serious doubt but that tax breaks and subsidies—not environmental, energy, or economic benefits—are primary reasons that “wind farms” are being built.

Energy Source	Government Subsidizing per MWH*
Wind Power	\$ 23.34
Natural Gas	\$ 0.25
Coal	\$ 0.44
Hydro Power	\$ 0.67
Nuclear Power	\$ 1.59

TOURISM IS ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

Most people visit Northeast Oregon do so for the scenery and the outdoor recreation, such as hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, bird, wildlife viewing, sightseeing in cars or on motorcycles. Our area has a higher than average number of people interested in historic sites and attractions with the Oregon Trail as one of our biggest. This historic trail will be highly impacted by turbines, service roads and power lines of the Antelope Ridge project.

The annual tourism revenue for Union County amounts to \$33.2 million , Baker County \$47.9 million, and Wallowa County \$26.8 million. These dollars generated 380 jobs for Union County, 690 jobs for Baker County and 510 jobs for Wallowa County, which is a significant factor in our local economy.

If we lose 25% of our annual tourism revenue as previous wind project studies have indicated, it will amount to a \$26.7 million loss t the tri-county area, not to mention a job loss of 395 jobs. Fifteen years of lost tourism amounts to \$400 million which will continue long after the 15 years. The Antelope Ridge Wind Farm is projected to provide only 15 jobs, annual tax revenue of \$7 million or \$105 million over the 15 years, if there is no Strategic Investment Program allowed.

So why are our county officials allowing this wind project to come into our beautiful valley?

Throwing Union County to the Wind

Horizon Wind is benefiting enormously from an Oregon tax gimmick known as the **Strategic Investment Program (SIP)** that was implemented by our legislature to encourage business to come to Oregon or expand current businesses, like Intel with a large employee base.

The issue with the program is businesses, such as wind power, that hire very few long-term employees have been able to benefit at the cost of the taxpayer. The **SIP** provides for tax incentives if the project exceeds \$500,000 in rural areas. The Elkhorn Wind Farm at Telocast has a real market value of \$207 million, but due to **SIP**, they are only taxed on the assessed value of \$23.4 million resulting in \$335,053 in annual revenue to Union County. If the Elkhorn Wind Farm would have been taxed at the normal rate without the **SIP**, it would be generating \$1.5 to \$1.7 million in annual tax revenue that could have been distributed throughout the county.

If we use the same raw deal **SIP** scenario as the Elkhorn Wind Farm, we will generate approximately the same amount of annual revenue even though the Antelope Ridge Wind Farm is expected to have a real market value of \$700 million. Again due to the **SIP**, Horizon would be taxed on something less than \$25 million (see **Tax Give-Away**).

If the Antelope Ridge Wind Farm is not awarded the **SIP** by our county commissioners, the county will be able to collect annual taxes of approximately \$7 million the first year. By allowing this proposed wind farm, our pristine, rural land is being prostituted for few short term tax dollars and a program that will prove to be of negligible benefit.

If our commissioners would all stand together with their continuants and say to ODOE and Horizon “NO WIND FARMS IN UNION COUNTY,” the project would die. Instead they claim they cannot do anything to stop it, or maybe they don’t want to put out the effort.

The commissioners claim they have to have a SIP for the project to be able to distribute the funds across the county which is nonsense. Recently Commissioner Davidson made the statement “Without a SIP Union will not get any money.” What price tag are they putting on Union?

If we can stall this project for a year or more, there is a good chance it will die, since tax incentives, grants, stimulus funds and production tax credits are being cut back. Commissioners, pay attention, NO SIP!

County Commissioners’ SIP Tax Give-Away		
ELKHORN WIND FARM—2008		
	<u>Assessed Value</u>	<u>Annual Tax Revenue</u>
Real Market	\$207,000,000	\$2,070,000
SIP	\$ 23,400,000	(<u>\$ 335,053</u>)
TAX REVENUE WE <u>LOST</u>:		\$1,734,947

ANTELOPE RIDGE WIND FARM-1st Year		
	<u>Assessed Value</u>	<u>Annual Tax Revenue</u>
Real Market	\$700,000,000	\$ 7,000,000
SIP	\$ 25,000,000	(<u>\$ 357,500</u>)
TAX REVENUE WE <u>WILL LOSE</u>:		\$ 6,642,500

Call, write, email our county commissioners and tell them NO on SIP for the Antelope Ridge Wind Farm!

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 Mark Davidson mdavidson@union-county.org
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Subsidizing Foreign Companies *(Continued from page 3)*

billions of dollars to wind developers and commit the United States to generate as much as 20% of its electricity from so-called “renewable” sources. Foreign wind developers are licking their chops.

Ben Lieberman, a senior policy analyst focusing on energy and environmental issues for the Heritage Foundation asks:

“If wind power made sense, why would it need a government subsidy in the first place? It’s a bubble which bursts as soon as government subsidies end.”

Wind farms coming to your neighborhood. . .wind monitors are now up and running in High Valley.



View of Craig Mountain from Foothill Road. Turbines will be all along the top of the horizon.



View at top of Ladd Canyon where 100 to 150 trees per turbine will have to be removed, impacting fragile wildlife.



View from Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area of Craig Mountain and Ladd Canyon before power lines and turbines will dominate this pristine scene.



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