

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: _____

Project Title: Fountain Wind

Lead Agency: California Energy Commission

Contact Name: Leonidas Payne

Email: leonidas.payne@energy.ca.gov Phone Number: 916-838-2123

Project Location: unincorporated Shasta County
City *County*

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

See Attachment A

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

See Attachment A

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

Tribal Cultural Resources, wildfire risks, impacts to bald and golden eagles, land use ordinance banning development like the proposed project.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

Responsible Agencies

State Water Board

Regional Water Quality Control Board

Trustee Agency

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Attachment A for Summary Form

Project Description (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

The Fountain Wind Project is a proposed wind energy generation facility on approximately 2,855 acres of private, leased land in unincorporated Shasta County, California. The property is located approximately 1 mile west of the existing Hatchet Ridge Wind Project, 6 miles west of Burney, 35 miles northeast of Redding, immediately south of California State Route (Highway) 299, and near the private recreational facility of Moose Camp and other private inholdings.

The project would have a total nameplate generating capacity of up to 205 megawatts (MW). The applicant proposes to construct up to 48 turbines, each with a generating capacity of up to 7.2 MW. Associated infrastructure and facilities would include a 34.5-kilovolt overhead and underground electrical collector system to connect turbines together and to an on-site collector substation; overhead and underground fiber-optic communication lines and/or a microwave relay station; an on-site switching station to connect the project to the existing regional grid operated by the Pacific Gas and Electric Company; a temporary construction and equipment laydown area; up to nine temporary laydown areas distributed throughout the project site to temporarily store and stage materials and equipment; an operation and maintenance facility with employee parking; up to three permanent meteorological evaluation towers (METs); temporary, episodic deployment of mobile Sonic Detection and Ranging or Light Detection and Ranging systems within identified disturbance areas (e.g., at MET locations); two storage sheds; and three temporary concrete batch plants. Up to 19 miles of new access roads would be constructed within the project site, and up to 19 miles of existing roads would be improved. No new transmission lines are proposed.

Location:

Location	Township/Range	Latitude	Longitude
NW Corner	035N / 001E	40° 52' 17.78583515" N	121° 51' 59.70380910" W
NE Corner	035N / 002E	40° 51' 14.34660324" N	121° 46' 48.60091825" W
SE Corner	034N / 001E	40° 46' 41.24447906" N	121° 49' 18.54399918" W
SW Corner	034N / 002E	40° 46' 46.82428761" N	121° 51' 30.65781792" W

APNs:

027130046000	027140028000	027160020000	027160027000	027160047000
027160049000	027210006000	027220001000	029170006000	029170008000
029190010000	029190011000	029190012000	029190013000	029190014000
029190016000	029190017000	029200043000	029210001000	029210009000
029210019000	029210020000	029210021000	029220006000	029250001000
029250010000	030080005000	030080006000	030080007000	030080008000
030080013000	030080014000	034010003000	034010004000	034010008000

034010016000	034010017000			
--------------	--------------	--	--	--

Identify the project’s significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect

Although the EIR will analyze the reasonably foreseeable direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed project in the topic areas specified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, and environmental justice (EJ), preliminary review of the application and other filed information indicates the following probable environmental effects:

Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources. At least twenty discrete tribal cultural resources are in the proposed project site or within its viewshed. The cumulative archaeological and ethnographic evidence, and modern Native testimony presented in Shasta County’s previous CEQA proceedings establish a Native American cultural landscape. According to members of the Pit River Tribe, trails link ridges like Hatchet Ridge to different valleys, settlements, and power places. Historical and current traditional medicine men and women travel to the power places to acquire their healing knowledge and visions. Successful vision quests at power places like Hatchet Ridge-Bunchgrass Mountain (in the project footprint) require those places to be isolated and tranquil, with sweeping natural vistas. Trails provide egress to hunting and plant-gathering areas, as well as to homes or trading partners. All these features of a cultural landscape coalesce in the Montgomery Creek drainage where the applicant proposes to build the project. Modern tribal communities retain their lengthy and intimate connection to this place and claim continuity of use today. In addition, over 20 known artifact and burial sites have been located in the area during planning work, which supports the conclusion that the region is rife with physical evidence of historical and cultural connection, including numerous instances of found human remains, the disturbance of which is probable. Mitigation for some found artifacts and burial sites is possible, but would not reduce the severity of impacts to a less-than-significant level for CEQA purposes.

Wildfire. Wildfire is a significant concern and public safety issue in California and locally. 21 years ago, the Fountain Fire, a significant damaging wildfire, burned through the area and destroyed more than 600 structures and indirectly lead to three deaths. A considerable number of documents addressing wildfire have been submitted to the docket from multiple sources. Staff’s preliminary assessment indicates that the project would have significant impacts and potentially have unmitigable impacts on wildfire. Three features of the project increase the risk of and potentially the severity of wildfires. First, the project creates open areas on ridgetops that allow wind to exacerbate fire risk to the exposed trees. Second, introducing fire sources such as electrical components (nacelles, electrical lines), and workers and associated equipment into the environment could create sparks and/or be a source of ignition in remote areas. Third, the project would introduce significant limitations on aerial firefighting abilities to aid in controlling

and reducing the intensity of wildfires in the project area due to the spacing and height of the proposed remote turbines (over 600 feet tall). Aerial firefighting uses several types of aerial firefighting assets including large and small fixed wing planes and helicopters; however, the use of these assets would be limited within the project area due to the presence and layout of the turbines. With the project layout, there are no clear straight paths for firefighting planes to fly across/through the project area and aerial firefighting would be primarily limited to small areas along the edge of the project site and areas outside the perimeter of the project. The ability of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) to use firefighting planes or helicopters within the project site during wildfires would be further dependent on other considerations such as fire conditions, wind, and topography that would increase the hazards related to the presence of the turbines. CalFire does not fly aerial firefighting craft within a minimum of 500 feet vertically or horizontally of turbine structures; for safety, this minimum distance would be increased, potentially significantly, during fires based on site and fire conditions. Although the project will increase access to the project site area for groundbased firefighting, the limits on use of aerial firefighting assets within the project site would hamper the effectiveness of firefighting activities. The testimony from Shasta County's CEQA proceedings, the applicant's Opt-in application, and comment letters submitted to the CEC present conflicting assessment of the significance of the additional wildfire risk the project represents, but there is substantial evidence to support the finding of significant impacts. CEC staff is currently coordinating with regional CalFire experts to discuss CalFire's perspective on the wildfire risk from the project turbines and other project features, and how effective proposed or other potential mitigation would be in the event of a wildfire.

Visual Resources. The aesthetic effects of the Fountain Wind Project are being assessed from nine, representative Key Observation Points (KOPs) at eight different locations, ranging from nearby viewing locations on Highway 299 in Hatchet Mountain Pass (approximately 0.5 to 0.75 mile distant; KOPs 4a and 4b) to moderate distance views (3 to 8 miles) from local mountain communities including Round Mountain, Montgomery Creek, and Burney (KOPs 2, 3a/3b, and 5a/5b respectively) (TN 250566). More distant regional views (approximately 18.5 to 28.5 miles) are from the Pit River Overlook (KOP 6) and the City of Redding (KOP 7) (TN 248320-8). Based on an assessment of project-induced visual contrast, structural dominance, and view blockage or impairment, it is expected that the project's overall visual change is likely to result in significant impacts. It is anticipated that project turbines and the eastern access road would substantially degrade the existing visual character and quality of public views of the site and its surroundings when seen from portions of Highway 299 through Hatchet Mountain Pass as documented in the visual simulations prepared for KOPs 4a and 4b. It is anticipated that these impacts would potentially be significant and unmitigable.

Biological Resources. Staff anticipates significant adverse impacts to or direct mortality of bald and golden eagles during project operations. Staff also anticipates significant adverse impacts due to mortality and injury to raptors as a result of collisions with wind turbines and electrical transmission lines during project operations. The

United States Fish and Wildlife Service has advised the applicant to obtain a take permit for bald and golden eagles based on the potential for the take of these species.

Inconsistency with local ordinance. Effective August 11, 2022, Shasta County Code section 17.88.335 prohibits any wind generation electric system not allowable under the small wind ordinance, which allows a single turbine per 5 acres for the electrical use of the service property only, not for sale to the grid, and not to exceed 65 feet in height. Section 17.88.335 was amended March 14, 2023, to add to the Legislative Findings in support of the Ordinance that “In light of the [impacts to biological, visual aesthetic, wildfire safety, historical, cultural, and tribal interests], the construction of large wind energy systems will not have an overall net positive economic benefit to the County of Shasta. The listed impacts outweigh any potential economic benefits to the County that may be available from such large wind energy systems.” Also, subdivision (f) of the revised ordinance states that no County officer, agency, or department is authorized to agree to any community benefits agreement for large wind energy systems without the prior approval of the Board of Supervisors. As currently proposed, the project is inconsistent with the Shasta County zoning prohibition against large scale wind. Therefore, the CEC cannot approve the project unless the CEC determines the facility is: 1) required for public convenience and necessity, and 2) that there are no more prudent and feasible means of achieving such public convenience and necessity. (Pub. Resources Code § § 25525 and 25545.8). In making the determination regarding the lack of a more prudent and feasible means to achieve the convenience and necessity of the project, the CEC must consider the impacts of the facility on the environment, consumer benefits, and electric system reliability.