

Purpose of the Final Environmental Impact Report

The Shasta County Department of Resource Management (County) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the environmental review of the Hatchet Ridge Wind Project and has principal responsibility for approving the project. This document, together with the draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the Hatchet Ridge Wind Project that was circulated in December 2007, constitutes the final EIR (FEIR) for the Hatchet Ridge Wind Project in Shasta County. The information presented in this document has been provided in accordance with the requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA Requirements

The content and format of this final EIR meet the requirements of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15132), which require that an final EIR comprise the components listed below.

- The draft EIR or a revision of the draft EIR (the draft EIR is hereby incorporated by reference).
- Comments and recommendations received on the draft EIR (Chapter 3 contains the 35 comment letters received).
- A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies who commented on the draft EIR (see Chapter 3).
- The responses of the lead agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process (see Chapters 2 and 3).
- Any other information added by the lead agency.

Recirculation of an EIR prior to certification is guided by State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15088.5). For example, a lead agency is required to recirculate an EIR when significant new information is added to the EIR after public notice is given of the availability of the DEIR for public review but before the EIR is certified. Such information can include changes to the project or environmental setting, as well as substantive additional data. New information added to an EIR is not considered significant unless the EIR is changed in a way that deprives the public of a meaningful opportunity to comment on a substantial adverse environmental effect of the project or a feasible way to mitigation or avoid such an effect, including a feasible project alternative that the project proponents have declined to implement.

In connection with the standards for adequacy of an EIR, State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15151) states that:

An EIR should be prepared with a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in the light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

No new significant information was added to the EIR on the basis of the comments and information received and the revisions to the EIR presented in Chapters 2, and 3. Accordingly, it is not necessary to recirculate the EIR.

The County will review and consider the final EIR. If the County finds that the final EIR is “adequate and complete,” the County may certify the final EIR at a public hearing. The rule of adequacy generally holds that the EIR can be certified if: (1) it shows good faith effort at full disclosure of environmental information; and (2) it provides sufficient analysis to allow decisions to be made regarding the project in contemplation of its environmental consequences.

Upon review and consideration of the final EIR, the County may take action to approve, revise, or reject the project. A decision to approve the project would be accompanied by written findings in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15091 and 15093. Public Resources Code Section 21081.6 requires that lead agencies adopt a mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) to describe measures that have been adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The final MMRP is presented in Chapter 4.

Public Review and Consultation Process

The County distributed a notice of preparation (NOP) of a draft EIR for the proposed project on April 11, 2007. The NOP was distributed for a 30-day comment period that ended on May 14, 2007. The County held an agency and public scoping meeting on the proposed project on April 27, 2007. The scoping meeting was an opportunity for agencies and the public to obtain information about the proposed project and to provide input regarding the issues they wanted addressed in the draft EIR. Comments about the NOP were considered in the preparation of the draft EIR.

The draft EIR was distributed to various public agencies, citizen groups, and interested individuals for a 45-day public review period, from December 13, 2007, through January 28, 2008. The draft EIR was circulated to state agencies for review through the State Clearinghouse of the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research. The draft EIR was made available for review on the County’s website (<http://www.co.shasta.ca.us/departments/resourcegmt/drm/Hatchet%20Ridge/Hatchet%20Ridge.htm>) as well as in the County’s offices.

The public was asked to provide oral or written comments during the meeting or provide written comments before closure of the public review period.

Document Organization

The final EIR for the Hatchet Ridge Wind Project is organized as shown below.

- Chapter 1, *Introduction*, identifies the purpose of this document.
- Chapter 2, *Comments and Responses*, contains the written comments submitted to the County of Shasta (County) during the public comment period. Responses are provided to significant environmental points raised during the public review process on the draft EIR. Each comment letter is included in this chapter, followed by responses to comments contained in that letter.
- Chapter 3, *Revisions to the Draft EIR*, presents the revisions to the text of the draft EIR made in response to the comments received. This chapter presents all text, tables, and graphics that were revised; in the case of text and tables, excerpted passages are shown in strikeout and underline.
- Chapter 4, *Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Program*, presents the MMRP and summarizes all the mitigation measures associated with the proposed project.
- Appendix A, *Applicant's Supplemental Information*, reproduces comments and additional information submitted by RES Americas Inc. subsequent to the end of the public comment period.
- Appendix B, *Nocturnal Radar Study*, is the complete report prepared by ABR Inc. presenting the results of the study prepared for HRW and WEST Inc. This report was completed subsequent to publication of the draft EIR.
- Appendix C, *Evaluation of Nocturnal Radar Study*, was prepared by Kenneth P. Able for the Wintu Audubon Society and submitted to the County. Professor Able's Curriculum Vitae is attached to the appendix.
- Appendix D, *Fire Safety Requirements*, contains the letters from the Shasta County Fire Department and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection detailing the fire-related requirements those agencies have agreed upon with the Shasta County Department of Resource Management.