

County commissioners deny conditional use permit for wind farm

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The county commissioners voted unanimously to deny two conditional-use permits that would have allowed an additional 120 wind turbines on Bridger-Butte.

Bridger Butte Wind Power and Bridger Butte Wind Power II, being run by Tasco Engineering, wanted to add the turbines in the general area of Bigelow Road and would extend southward from the current project.

Gary Tassainer of Tasco Engineering said if they got the conditional use permit, they would do everything required by the industrial siting committee, which included numerous environmental studies.

Rick Frandsen of Tasco Engineering told the commissioners that throughout the life of the project it was projected the county would receive over \$20.6 million in property tax revenues.

Commission chairman Mick Powers said the coalition of local governments was spending a lot of time and money investigating what was happening to the sage grouse. The new project would put turbines within a mile and a half of a core sage grouse area.

"I want to see the end results of the studies," Commissioner Bob Stoddard said. "I'd like to feel comfortable that everything has been done that can be possibly done."

"I know I won't commission a \$200,000- half-million study without being able to build something," Tassainer said. "I don't think anyone would."

When questioned about the industrial siting committee, Tassainer said they would dictate where the turbines could be placed based on the study, but would not wash the whole project.

Planning and zoning voted to recommend the permit and the commissioners received eight or nine letters for granting with three against.

"We need more information," Powers said. "We don't want to bring something into our backyard that's going to be a problem for us."