



Group plans to appeal wind farm decision

By JEREMY FUGLEBERG Casper Star-Tribune | Posted: Sunday, January 29, 2012 11:45 pm

A group of opponents to new power lines and wind farms in part of the Laramie Range will appeal to the Wyoming Supreme Court a lower court's approval of a wind farm proposed south of Glenrock.

A Wyoming District Court judge on Jan. 19 affirmed state and county permits for the 62-turbine, 100-megawatt Pioneer Wind Park wind farm proposed by Wasatch Wind of Park City, Utah.

The Northern Laramie Range Alliance appealed the permits granted by the Converse County Commission in May and by the state Industrial Siting Council — a state board that must approve large commercial projects in the state — in June.

Requirements not met

In a media release, the alliance's leadership said Wasatch Wind hasn't yet met an Industrial Siting Council requirement that the company show it is financially capable of building, running and eventually tearing down the wind farm.

"To date, Wasatch has not met this condition and has not indicated whether or how it will apply," they wrote.

Wasatch Wind spokeswoman Michelle Stevens said the company hopes the judge's decision will help opponents see the benefits of the project and realize that the permits were lawfully issued.

"We're pleased by the decision of the District Court but we're not surprised by it, because we've followed every rule, law and statute and went above and beyond in many cases," she said.

Installation this spring

According to a construction timeline for the project on the company's website, turbines and access roads installation will begin this spring.

The alliance also is opposing the proposed wind energy project on two other fronts. It has petitioned the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to reject Wasatch's claim that the project is really two smaller facilities, a move that helped reach deals to sell its power.

While Wasatch considers its proposed wind farm along Mormon Canyon Road a single project, it consists of two separate but nearby 31-turbine sites.

The alliance also has appealed to the state court a state Public Service Commission decision that allowed Wasatch more time to start delivering power from its project beyond the end of 2011.