

New wind energy panel forms

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CHEYENNE -- Wyoming's new Task Force on Wind Energy will get organized May 20 at its first meeting beginning at 1 p.m. in Room 302 in the State Capitol.

The committee, which includes three senators, four representatives, a county commissioner and a representative of industry, will adopt a plan of action for the one-year study.

Sen. Jim Anderson, R-Glenrock, and Rep. Rodney Anderson, R-Pine Bluffs, will preside until the group elects a permanent chairman.

The Legislature's Joint Appropriations Committee allocated \$10,000 for the study, an amount Jim Anderson said will allow for only three meetings.

The first half-day meeting will be a session to define the study.

"We're trying to get off to a productive start with the idea that we probably won't finish given the size of the task," Jim Anderson said.

"We're going to have to be really targeted. We want to prioritize those things we want to do first," he added.

Then if the task force doesn't finish, it can recommend areas that merit future study by a future task force or perhaps an interim study by a legislative standing committee, he said.

The Legislature directed the study to include the potential for new legislation on revenue and regulations affecting wind energy operations.

It also requires a study of statutes dealing with the authority of the Industrial Siting Administration, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Wyoming Public Service Commission, county zoning authority and any federal laws that may pre-empt or limit state or county authority.

The task force also is to look at other issues relating to the wind energy conversion industry it may decide are relevant, including the appropriate agencies to regulate the industry, the process for decommissioning of facilities and wind generation tax policies.

Rodney Anderson said last week the assignment essentially is how to make the industrial siting process work and to provide for consistency between the counties on permitting wind farms.

"We're just going to get organized enough to find out what questions to ask," he said. "We don't plan to make any decisions."

Other members include Sens. Marty Martin, D-Rock Springs, and Drew Perkins, R-Casper, and Reps. Seth Carson, D-Laramie, William Steward, R-Encampment, and Tim Stubson, R-Casper.

The two members appointed by the governor are Ken Connelly, a Lincoln County commissioner, and William Miller.

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