

Wind energy task force to meet 1st time

By The Associated Press

CHEYENNE - A legislator said a new state task force on wind energy will need to be focused and productive to accomplish its goals.

The first meeting of the task force is set for May 20 at the Capitol in Cheyenne.

The committee is made up of three state senators, four state representatives, a county commissioner and an industry representative. The group plans to spend a year studying wind energy in Wyoming.

The Legislature has appropriated \$10,000 for the study - an amount that will only allow for three meetings, according to Sen. Jim Anderson, R-Glenrock.

"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.

The task force will need to be focused and prioritize its goals, he said.

If the task force doesn't finish all it sets out to do, he said, it can recommend areas that merit future study by a future task force or possibly an interim study by a legislative committee.

The Legislature has called for the study to look at the potential for new legislation having to do with revenue and regulations affecting wind energy operations.

The study also will examine state 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.

Rep. Rodney Anderson, R-Pine Bluffs, said 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 appointed by the governor are Ken Connelly, a Lincoln County commissioner, and William Miller.