

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DISTRICT 4

OFFICE OF TRANSIT AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

P.O. BOX 23660, MS-10D

OAKLAND, CA 94623-0660

PHONE (510) 286-5528

TTY 711

www.dot.ca.gov

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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September 20, 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

SCH #2010082063

GTS # 04-ALA-2017-00452

GTS ID: 8888

ALA-580-PM 2.44

Andrew Young, Planner
County of Alameda
224 W. Winton Avenue, Suite 110
Hayward, CA 94544

Sand Hill Wind Project – Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (DSEIR)

Dear Andrew Young:

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the Sand Hill Wind Project. In tandem with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), Caltrans' mission signals our continuing approach to evaluate and mitigate impacts to the State's multimodal transportation network. Caltrans' Strategic Management Plan 2015-2020 aims, in part, to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG) in alignment with state goals and policies. Our comments are based on the August 2019 DSEIR.

Project Understanding

The project applicant, Sand Hill Wind, LLC proposes the Sand Hill Wind Repowering Project (Project) on 15 privately owned parcels in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area. The proposed Project would install up to 40 new wind turbines and is expected to utilize turbines with generating capacities between 2.3 and 4.0 megawatts (MW) each, all generally similar in size and appearance, to develop up to 144.5 MW of generating capacity. The Project is proposed as a Conditional Use Permit (Alameda County Planning case PLN2017-00201) and is reviewed in the SEIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15162, as a project tiered under the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area Repowering Program EIR (PEIR), which the County of Alameda certified in December 2014. The project is directly adjacent to Interstate (I-) 580 and access is provided from West Grant Line Road.

Landscape Architecture/Aesthetics

The stretch of I-580 directly adjacent to the project area is classified as an eligible scenic highway. Visual impacts caused by the project may be seen from travelers on I-580. After the description of proposed work and temporary alterations to the site for construction, include language for the replacement of grassland landscape. Erosion control and hydroseeded replacement native grasses is recommended on all areas impacted by turbine work and new roadways.

Construction-Related Impacts

Visual impacts from construction operations can be reduced by placing unsightly material and equipment in staging areas where they aren't as visible and/or covering the items where possible. Utilizing directional lighting and/or shielding for night work would help reduce light trespass affecting motorists where work is occurring near I-580 or local roads. After construction, areas cleared for contractor access and trenching operations should be treated with appropriate erosion control measures.

Potential impacts to the State Right-of-Way (ROW) from project-related temporary access points should be analyzed. Mitigation for significant impacts due to construction and noise should be identified in the DSEIR. Project work that requires movement of oversized or excessive load vehicles on state roadways requires a transportation permit that is issued by Caltrans. To apply, visit: <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/transportation-permits>.

Prior to construction, coordination is required with Caltrans to develop a Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to reduce construction traffic impacts to the STN.

Lead Agency

As the Lead Agency, the County of Alameda is responsible for all project mitigation, including any needed improvements to the State Transportation Network (STN.) The project's fair share contribution, financing, scheduling, implementation responsibilities and lead agency monitoring should be fully discussed for all proposed mitigation measures.

Encroachment Permit

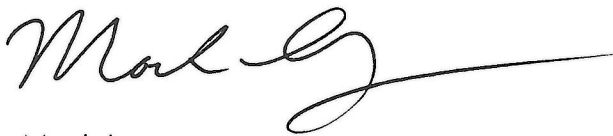
Please be advised that any work or traffic control that encroaches onto the State ROW requires a Caltrans-issued encroachment permit. To obtain an encroachment permit, a completed encroachment permit application, environmental documentation, six (6) sets of plans clearly indicating the State ROW, and six (6) copies of signed, dated and stamped (include stamp

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expiration date) traffic control plans must be submitted to: Office of Encroachment Permits, California DOT, District 4, P.O. Box 23660, Oakland, CA 94623-0660. To download the permit application and obtain more information, visit <https://dot.ca.gov/programs/traffic-operations/ep/applications>.

Thank you again for including Caltrans in the environmental review process. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Andrew Chan at 510-622-5433 or andrew.chan@dot.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Leong', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Leong
District Branch Chief
Local Development - Intergovernmental Review

c: State Clearinghouse