

**Department of Energy**  
Western Area Power Administration  
Upper Great Plains Customer Service Region  
P.O. Box 35800  
Billings, MT 59107-5800

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**NOV 16 2016**

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**NOV 21 2016**  
**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC**  
**UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Dear Interested Party:

The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) has completed the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Willow Creek Wind Energy Facility (Project) in Butte County, South Dakota, and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The Project involves the potential construction of an approximate 103-MW wind farm generating facility that includes up to 45 turbines, an underground power collection system, substation, access roads, and a maintenance and operation center. The Project would produce up to 450,000 megawatt hours of electricity per year, which would enter the grid through an interconnection with WAPA's Maurine to Rapid City 115-kV Transmission Line inside the Project Area.

In August 2016, the Draft EA was circulated for pre-approval review to satisfy our obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), including the Council on Environmental Quality NEPA Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508) and Department of Energy NEPA regulations (10 CFR 1021). WAPA solicited public comment on the Draft EA from interested agencies, tribes, groups, and individuals. Copies of correspondence received and an analysis of the comments are included as appendices to the Final EA.

This letter is intended to provide notice to interested parties that the Final EA is available and no identified impacts were found to be significant, or they have been reduced to a less-than-significant level with the implementation of conservation measures; therefore, WAPA has issued a FONSI. Both the Final EA and FONSI for the Project are available on WAPA's website at <https://www.wapa.gov/regions/UGP/Environment/Pages/willow-creek-wind.aspx>.

If you have any questions regarding the Project or about our NEPA process with regard to this Project, please contact Lou Hanebury, Environmental Protection Specialist, WAPA-Upper Great Plains, at (406) 255-2812 or (800) 358-3415, or by e-mail at [hanebury@wapa.gov](mailto:hanebury@wapa.gov).

Sincerely,

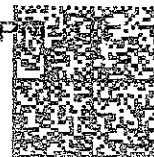
for Matthew L. Marsh  
Environmental Manager  
Western Area Power Administration  
Upper Great Plains Region

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**  
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