Response to Comment Letter K

Descanso Community Planning Group
Michael A. Sterns
December 22, 2011

K-1

The County acknowledges the Descanso Community Planning Group (CPG) opposition to the proposed project and the reduced alternatives. The CPG position will be made clear to the decision makers for this project.

K-2

The County acknowledges that the Descanso CPG supports the No Project Alternative in the DEIR. This information will be provided to the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.

K-3

The comment requests a moratorium for large wind turbine projects and the initiation of new studies to evaluate impacts from large wind turbines. This recommendation would conflict with the project objectives of the Wind Energy Ordinance. Nevertheless, the Descanso CPG can present this option to the County Board of Supervisors as a project alternative during the hearing process. In addition, the CPG's comments will be included in the Final EIR and staff report to the decision makers.

K-4

The County acknowledges the Descanso (CPG) opposition to the General Plan Amendment proposed...
for the Boulevard Community Plan. Both the Limited Large Wind Turbine Alternative and the No Project Alternative would maintain the existing language within the community plan. Ultimately, the County Board of Supervisors will determine which project or alternative will be implemented. The information in this comment will be in the Final EIR for review and consideration by the Board.

**K-5**
This comment does not raise a significant environmental issue for which a response is required. For clarification, large wind turbine projects are categorized as Major Impact Services and Utilities in the Zoning Ordinance, which is a civic use type pursuant to Section 2105.a. The proposed Wind Energy Ordinance will not change this classification; therefore, large wind turbines would still fall under civic use types.

**K-6**
Issues raised in this comment are not inconsistent with the existing content of the DEIR. Section 2.6.3.7 identifies potentially significant impacts associated with wildland fires for both large and small wind turbines. It should be noted, however, that issues related to fire insurance rates/coverage were not discussed in the DEIR since this topic is not related to environmental impacts. See CEQA Guidelines section 15131.
This comment raises concerns regarding property values. This topic was not evaluated in the DEIR since it is not related to environmental impacts. See CEQA Guidelines section 15131. However, this type of information can be presented to decision makers for their consideration during the hearing process for the project.

Issues raised in this comment are not inconsistent with the existing content of the DEIR. Section 2.1 identifies potentially significant impacts associated with aesthetics and community character. While future large wind turbine projects will be required to minimize visual impacts, it is anticipated that most will have significant and unavoidable aesthetic effects.

Please see response to comment F1.

The County agrees that large wind turbine projects may result in significant impacts to wildlife, such as birds and bats, and to agricultural resources. See DEIR Sections 2.4.7 and 2.2.7.

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Related infrastructure that can result in catastrophic wildfires, increased fire insurance rates, or loss of fire insurance coverage due to increased risk.

- These industrial projects can also represent a significant loss of property values, and quality of life for impacted non-participating property owners as already documented by numerous professional real estate appraisers, and others, who are not associated with the wind industry or government-funded studies meant to support and promote wind energy projects.

**Our position also includes the following concerns being ignored in this process:**

- Large-scale industrial wind turbine projects, with turbines up to 500 feet tall, are not compatible in bulk and scale with historic rural land uses, under County authority, and represent a degrading and invasive visual intrusion, day and night (with FAA required lighting), regardless of which San Diego County community’s view sheds is impacted.

- Adverse health effects have been documented in people living in homes up to 350 km (6-21 miles) of industrial wind energy projects and substations, with homes reportedly abandoned near wind projects in the US, Australia, Canada, Japan, and throughout Europe as documented by various groups including The Society for Wind Vigilance, The Waudra Foundation, European Platform Against Windfarms, North American Platform Against Windfarms, Industrial Wind Action, National Wind Watch, and others.

- Significant adverse impacts to wildlife and livestock, from industrial wind turbine project operations, has been documented by many of the same groups noted above, in addition to national non-profit environmental organizations, news media, and others.

Please consider the County’s obligation to protect the public health and safety and well being of all County residents along with the diverse natural resources.

Respectfully,

Michael A. Sterns, Chair

CC: Supervisor Dianne Jacob

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Reponses to Comments

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