

Laurie Lickley

DISTRICT 25,
Jerome & Twin Falls Counties

HOME ADDRESS
445 E. 400 South
Jerome, ID
83338
(208) 420-7975

EMAIL: LLickley@house.idaho.gov



House of Representatives State of Idaho

COMMITTEES

Environment, Energy & Technology

Health & Welfare

Vice Chairman Resources &

Conservation

13 July 2022

Tracy Stone Manning, BLM Director
Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Manning,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project proposed in Lincoln, Jerome, and Minidoka counties in Idaho.

Our family homesteaded here in Jerome in 1908 and have made this area our home for over 110 years. I want our communities to invest in projects and businesses that will complement our existing landscape and businesses. We want projects that guarantee the sustainability and economic vitality of our communities and our families. I am afraid that the Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project will not do that.

As an elected leader, I have heard from hundreds of my community members and must in good conscience be a voice for my constituents and their concerns. I respectfully request the Department of Interior issue a stay on the Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project.

Federal law has established that federal lands are to be managed for multiple use. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), passed in 1976, states that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) must manage its land under principles of multiple use and sustained yield in accordance with land use plans developed by the agency. By law, multiple use is defined as "the management of public lands and their various resource values so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people" and "a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and non-renewable resources, including but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific and historical values."

Clearly, the intent behind these laws which guarantee multiple use of public lands is to ensure that various land uses are allowed to coexist. What happens when one type of use, particularly one that has been traditionally held and protected- like livestock grazing- is limited by another use? Grazing may be compatible when the project is complete but how will our ranchers stay in business during the construction period. The Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project is a perfect example of this.

We are told by Magic Valley Energy that as many as 2,200 vehicles per day may access the proposed project area during the construction period. What is the plan for the safety of families and their pets along the access routes?

The push by the President Biden and his administration for increased renewable energy by the federal government is another example of a serious conflict potential between existing land uses. The Department of Interior (DOI) recently submitted a report to Congress regarding rapid expansion of renewable energy projects-wind and solar-on public lands. We need to slow down the “green” incentives and fast-tracked approval of these large-scale wind and solar projects until we can better understand the conflict between uses and users.

These are some of the known concerns and potential conflicts that cannot be successfully mitigated or addressed properly. These potential conflicts between multiple users are long: hunting, wildlife habitat, migration corridors, water usage, aviation, wildfires, livestock grazing, the ecological landscape, the cultural landscape, recreators, rural road traffic, and ultimately, and no socio-economic benefits. Most importantly, my rural communities have reasonably spoken. Any benefit from a project this size is lost in its tremendous footprint.

Idaho’s rangelands are critically important to our economy and local communities for the open space and recreational opportunities they provide and as habitat for more than 350 species. Rangelands west wide are under siege from multiple threats including fire, invasive plants, increased recreational use and development. We must take a comprehensive approach to manage and conserve productive working landscapes while meeting desired ecological, economic, and social outcomes.

Again, thank you for the ability to comment on the Lava Ridge Wind Energy Project that is proposed in Jerome, Lincoln, and Minidoka counties in Idaho. I respectfully request the Department of Interior push the pause button on this proposed project and others like it and reanalyze how it manages conflicting multiple users.

Please include me in any communication on this project.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie Lickley".

Representative Laurie Lickley