



RLN 11/29/15

Letters to the Editor

Next Era Windfarm: Unanswered Questions

Dear Editor,

The Planning Commission asked Next Era representatives two key questions during the rebuttal phase of the hearing on January 6. These were in regard to the email from David Gil to the Upper Big Sandy water board secretary inquiring about director elections, qualifications and terms of office, and the second was in regard to Next Era's certainty in mid 2014 of a positive outcome of the Planning Commission and BOCC amended application votes in 2015.

The Next Era Crystal Ball was apparently cracked at the time their CPO made the Planning Commission prediction in June of 2014, just after the \$1.625 million check to El Paso County cleared the bank. It remains to be seen if the CPO's advanced knowledge of the BOCC vote on February 5 will be more accurate.

In my professional opinion, Next Era's answers to these two key questions during the Planning Commission hearing were less than responsive. These questions should be asked again by the BOCC, along with all the rest of the unanswered questions:

1. What was the purpose of the email

from David Gil to the Upper Big Sandy water board, inquiring about director terms and qualifications? To quote the unanswered Planning Commission question, "Were you trying to change the Board?"

2. Why did Next Era pay \$275,000 for a key parcel within Falcon that completed the elevated transmission line right of way, seven months prior to the BOCC vote that may, or may not, approve the change to an elevated line?

3. Was Next Era's confidence in a January 2015 approval of the elevated power line influenced by the \$1.625 million payment to El Paso County in June 2014?

4. Referring to Colorado Public Utilities Commission Ruling C13-1267, how much power "capacity" will the Next Era Windfarm provide to the Public Service Company System? (Copies of the PUC Ruling and thus the answer to this key question will be provided to the BOCC)

5. General Electric documents specify an Ice Throw danger zone radius of 902 feet for the GE 1.7 turbine, yet Next Era has recommended a radius of only 679.5 feet between turbine sites

and county roads, school bus routes, and student pick up locations. The reduction from 902 feet is apparently based on installing electronic sensors and software. However, GE Energy documents show that these same sensors are "...not reliable" and may not react in time to prevent an ice throw incident. If the 679.5 foot Ice Throw danger zone is implemented, is Next Era confident that there will be no injuries to students and county residents going about their daily routines due to falling chunks of ice over the next 25 winters?

6. Was Next Era counting on land owners along the elevated power line through Falcon to have insufficient time to organize an effective opposition?

7. Did Next Era intend to actually install the buried power line or was it Next Era's intension, even in December of 2013, to eventually apply for an elevated line through residential areas of Falcon and then delay announcing this major change until late December of 2014?

Sincerely,
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Consulting Engineer