



June 18, 2024

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Tracy Stone-Manning  
Director, Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St., NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland and Director Stone-Manning:

We write to convey our extreme dissatisfaction regarding the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Lava Ridge Wind Project in Southern Idaho, released earlier this month by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The preferred alternative identified in the FEIS for Lava Ridge does not adequately address the issues that have been present since the beginning of this review process. This project has garnered near unanimous opposition in Idaho, and yet, this administration seems dead set to push it forward. Meanwhile, the valid and ongoing concerns voiced by our constituents have been disregarded.

One of the most disheartening aspects of this situation is, in fact, the BLM's disingenuous characterization of the actions they have taken to address stakeholder concerns. The agency seems to understand the concerns are numerous and robust as it has attempted to spin the proposed action as a sizeable scale-down and compromise by comparing the FEIS preferred alternative to the original, largest build-out baseline proposal. In fact, compared to one of the Draft EIS preferred alternatives – which our constituents vehemently opposed – this final proposed action reflects a mere 10% reduction in number of turbines and 11% reduction in turbine size—not a 50% reduction as touted by the BLM.

This tactic not only discounts the legitimacy of the concerns raised but also portrays a lack of transparency and accountability on the part of the BLM. The agency did not genuinely work with stakeholders to remedy concerns over the Minidoka National Historic Site, grazing, wildfire response, and more.

Furthermore, the assertion that the alterations made in the FEIS have rectified the issues surrounding the Minidoka National Historic Site viewshed is inaccurate. The FEIS is strongly opposed by the Friends of Minidoka, Minidoka Pilgrimage Planning Committee, Japanese American Citizen League, and Minidoka survivors, descendants, and allies. BLM has demonstrated a shocking lack of sensitivity in this space. Despite claims of improvements, it is evident that the towers will still be highly visible from the site, thus failing to address the fundamental concerns regarding preservation and respect for this important cultural destination and historic landmark.

BLM has yet to acknowledge the gravity of these concerns or take meaningful steps to address them. Ignoring the voices of our constituents and attempting to downplay the severity of the issues they raise only serves to exacerbate the situation and erode trust in your agency's decision-making process. While certain renewable projects may be appropriate and able to garner the support of local communities, pushing this proposal—which is of no benefit to Idahoans and comes at the expense of many of our valuable resources—will only stigmatize future projects that could in fact support Idaho's energy needs.

It is abundantly clear that the BLM needs to reconsider its approach to engaging with stakeholders in Idaho. Given the strong opposition from local and affected communities, we strongly encourage the BLM withhold issuing a Record of Decision (ROD) for the Lava Ridge Wind Project.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Brad Little  
Governor of Idaho



Scott Bedke  
Lt. Governor of Idaho



James E. Risch  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



Mike Simpson  
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress