

Campbell County Wind Farm 2 Interconnection Request

*Finding of No Significant Impact and
Decision*

Campbell County, South Dakota



**Western Area
Power Administration**

DOE/EA-2062

April 2025

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)

ACTION: Determination of Finding of No Significant Impact and WAPA's selection of Proposed Action for Implementation.

SUMMARY: Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), a Power Marketing Administration, enters into interconnection agreements for utilization of its transmission system in a non-discriminatory manner with electric utilities, firm-power customers, private power developers, and independent power generators. WAPA's Upper Great Plains Region (WAPA-UGPR), as a member of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), must offer excess transmission capacity and interconnections to WAPA-UGPR facilities in accordance with the SPP's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved Open Access Transmission Tariff (OATT).

WAPA received an interconnection request from Campbell County Wind Farm 2, LLC's (CCWF2) under the FERC approved SPP OATT and has analyzed the potential environmental impacts of its decision to proceed with the interconnection request and modify its facilities to accommodate the interconnection. WAPA's decision is considered a Federal action under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Campbell County Wind Farm 2, LLC (CCWF2 or Applicant) proposes to construct the Campbell County Wind Farm 2 Project (CCWF2 Project), an approximately 98.6-megawatt wind farm. The CCWF2 Project would be located within an approximately 12,000-acre area (CCWF2 Project Area) on land leased from participating landowners in Campbell County, South Dakota. CCWF2, under the SPP OATT, requested to interconnect the CCWF2 Project with WAPA's existing Campbell County Substation. WAPA decision is limited to whether to proceed with the interconnection agreement and modify its facilities to accommodate the interconnection. WAPA does not directly authorize or permit a developer's generation project.

WAPA is aware that on February 25, 2025, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, WAPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations as part of its analysis in the EA, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*

The interconnection request was analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) tiered from the analysis conducted in the *Upper Great Plains Wind Energy Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (2015 PEIS), a document prepared jointly by WAPA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The 2015 PEIS common environmental impacts were reviewed and remain valid. Applicable material from the 2015 PEIS was incorporated by reference in the EA, in accordance with NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4336b). Where site specific effects may be different, additional analyses are included in the EA. The EA is intended to be read in conjunction with the 2015 PEIS, and the EA and 2015 PEIS together comprise the NEPA documentation for this Federal action.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: A copy of all associated NEPA documents are available at the following website: <https://www.wapa.gov/about-wapa/regions/ugp/environment/campbell-county-2/>

For additional information, please contact:

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PROPOSED ACTION: WAPA must consider whether to proceed with CCWF2's interconnection request in accordance with the Southwest Power Pool's (SPP) FERC-approved Tariff and the Federal Power Act. The Proposed Action is for WAPA to proceed with the CCWF2 Project transmission system interconnection request and modify WAPA facilities to accommodate the interconnection, which includes:

- Construction of a new Point of Interconnection along the existing Bismarck to Glenham 230-kV transmission line
- Modification of a bay within the existing WAPA Campbell County Substation.

CCWF2's private development of the CCWF2 Project and its environmental effects are described and disclosed in the EA. CCWF2 would construct, own, and operate the CCWF2 Project in Campbell County, South Dakota. The CCWF2 Project includes:

- up to 29 wind turbines;
- up to 10.3 mi of new access roads;
- four temporary meteorological (MET) towers;
- one permanent MET tower;
- potential installation of Aircraft Detection Lighting System (ADLS) at the turbines and permanent MET tower;
- up to 30.7 mi of underground electrical collector systems;
- a fiber optic communication system;
- expansion of an existing substation to include a new CCWF2-owned 0.6 ac substation facilities near the WAPA POI
- replacement of an existing overhead transmission line with 277 feet (ft) of 230-kV overhead transmission line (gen-tie line) to the WAPA POI; and
- a 20.0-ac temporary laydown/staging area and concrete batch plant.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE: DOE NEPA Implementing Regulations require that EAs include a "No Action" alternative (10 CFR 1021.321(c)). Under the No Action Alternative, WAPA would not

proceed with the interconnection agreement and would not modify its facilities to accommodate the interconnection. For the purposes of the impact analysis in the EA, the No Action Alternative assumed the CCWF2 Project would not be constructed.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: WAPA held a public scoping comment period from November 2 – December 2, 2022, to provide the general public, government agencies, tribal governments, and others with the opportunity to identify issues and alternatives that would help WAPA define the scope of the EA. Both an agency scoping meeting and public scoping meeting were held at separate times on November 2, 2022. Agency staff were also invited to attend the virtual public scoping meeting. The scoping meeting was advertised through local newspaper announcements to the general public and individual letters to federal, state, and local agencies, tribal governments, and landowners within and adjacent to the PPA. WAPA circulated the draft EA for public review and comment for 30 days, ending on September 20, 2024. All comments on the draft EA were considered in preparation of the Final EA. Comments throughout the NEPA process and responses are included in Appendix B of the Final EA. The public scoping meeting documentation and Draft EA publication documentation is included in Appendix L of the EA.

TRIBAL INVOLVEMENT: Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, WAPA initiated tribal consultations, by letter, with the following five tribes on July 20, 2023:

- Cheyenne River Sioux
- Rosebud Sioux
- Santee Sioux Nation
- Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate
- Standing Rock Sioux

The Cheyenne River Sioux and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate tribes responded to the consultation request, participated in the Class III Cultural Survey, and have coordinated with WAPA on the Project.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The EA disclosed the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives, and the CCWF2 Project. Environmental impacts are described in chapters 3 and 4 of the EA. The determination of these impacts includes CCWF2's implementation of the environmental commitments from the 2015 PEIS and integration of environmental protection (conservation) measures into their CCWF2 Project.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS: CCWF2's best management practices and mitigation measures are integrated into their CCWF2 Project and are listed in Chapter 3 and Appendix A of the Final EA.

FINDING: WAPA evaluated the potential environmental impacts in a variety of contexts, including national, regional, and local scales and intensities. WAPA determined that the potential impacts resulting from the Proposed Action are consistent with those evaluated in the

2015 PEIS and identified no new significant impacts to environmental resources or the human environment, either individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area.

WAPA found that the Proposed Action does not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. As a result, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is warranted, and an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. This FONSI was prepared in accordance with NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4336) and the DOE's NEPA implementing regulations at 10 CFR 1021.322.

CCWF2's avoidance and environmental protection measures integrated into the CCWF2 Project contribute to this final FONSI determination. This includes actions such as:

- Consultation with the USFWS was completed on four species with potential to be affected by the Project in accordance with Section 7 of the ESA and the 2015 PEIS and PBA. Consultation included informal consultation through the PBA Species Consistency Evaluation Forms. Details are provided in Appendix F of the Final EA.
- It is anticipated that CCWF2 Project impacts to jurisdictional waterbodies would be authorized under the USACE NWP 14. CCWF2 would coordinate with the USACE as needed to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act.
- Noise and shadow flicker assessments were conducted to model the potential impacts of the Project. While noise at certain buildings not participating in the Project are expected to increase to a level over 45 dBA, CCWF2 received a variance from the County in coordination with the affected landowners. Modeled shadow flicker impacts were found acceptable and Campbell County has granted the CCWF2 Project a conditional use permit.
- Consultation with the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and potentially interested tribes was completed in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the South Dakota SHPO concurred with WAPA's determination of No Adverse Effect to cultural resources on February 14, 2025. WAPA also consulted with the Cheyenne River Sioux and Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate tribes, including their participation in cultural surveys of the Project. CCWF2 siting of project infrastructure to avoid sensitive cultural and tribal resources and will coordinate with the tribe in tribal monitoring during construction.
- The Project does not violate any known federal, state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. Federal, state, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the environmental analysis process through public scoping and the public comment period on the Draft EA.
- The Project is consistent with requirements under 10 CFR 1022 for federal agencies to avoid supporting development in a floodplain or new construction in a wetland wherever there are practicable alternatives. All aboveground Project infrastructure would be located outside mapped floodplains.

- The Project itself is typical of wind generation projects across the nation. It is not unique or unusual and does not establish a precedent for future actions.

DECISION RECORD: WAPA makes a finding of no significant impacts and selects the Proposed Action Alternative for implementation.

Issued in Billings, Montana on April 25, 2025.

LLOYD LINKE Digitally signed by LLOYD LINKE
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