

IDAHO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Case No. IPC-E-05-6, IPC-E-05-7, IPC-E-05-8, IPC-E-05-9

April 26, 2005

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Commission OKs Idaho Power contracts with Hagerman area wind projects

Boise – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has approved an Idaho Power Company proposal to buy wind energy from four wind projects in the Hagerman area. Combined, the projects can sell Idaho Power up to 40 average megawatts on a monthly basis. One megawatt is enough electricity to provide power to about 850 homes.

Each of the four projects consists of seven 1.5 MW wind turbines. The projects are Thousand Springs Wind Park, Pilgrim Stage Station Wind Park, Oregon Trail Wind Park and Tuana Gulch Wind Park, all owned by Montana-based Exergy Development Group.

While all the commenting parties to the case support wind energy, some expressed concerns regarding the turbines' environmental impact and light pollution. The commission noted that siting issues are outside the commission's statutory jurisdiction and are typically decided by county boards of commissioners and local planning and zoning authorities. The commission encouraged citizens concerned about siting issues to participate in those local discussions and public hearings.

Each of the wind projects will qualify as a small power production facility eligible for rates set by the commission under the federal Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, passed by Congress during the energy crisis of the late 1970s. PURPA encourages development of renewable energy technologies as alternatives to burning fossil fuels or constructing new power plants. The federal act requires that electric utilities offer to buy power produced by small power producers or cogenerators who obtain Qualifying Facility (QF) status. The rate to be paid to project developers is to be equal to the cost the electric utility avoids if it would have had to generate the power itself or buy it from another source.

Copies of the commission's order and related documents to this case are available on the commission's homepage at www.puc.idaho.gov. Click on "File Room," and then on "Electric Cases," and scroll down to the appropriate case number (IPC-E-05-6, 7, 8 and 9). Petitions for reconsideration must be filed by no later than May 16 and can be mailed to P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0074 or faxed to (208) 334-3762.