

To: Whom It May Concern

**From: Paul Callahan, Principal, Environmental Services,
Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc.**

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**RE: Social and Environmental Review of
SunZia Wind Project, Pattern Energy, New Mexico**

Burns & McDonnell has been engaged in the environmental review of Pattern Energy’s wind developments in New Mexico since 2018. Over the course of development of Pattern Energy’s wind development areas in central New Mexico, Burns & McDonnell has completed environmental reports (hereinafter, the “Environmental Reports”) for Pattern Energy. These developments include what is now the SunZia Wind Project. These Environmental Reports are associated with state siting proceedings that require review of project design alternatives and potential impacts to the human environment.

As the generation footprint has expanded and the alignment of the project generation tie-in transmission system has been updated, Burns & McDonnell has incrementally developed the Environmental Reports in support of siting approval received from the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC). The PRC has siting jurisdiction over renewable energy projects. In total, there have been four Location Control Approvals (LCA’s) issued for wind generation areas of which the SunZia Wind Project is comprised.

The Environmental Reports for these four projects were formulated to be in conformance with New Mexico Administrative Code 17.9.592.10. New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) (17.9.592.10 (E)) states that the application for a Location Approval shall contain:

“if preparation of a federal environmental assessment or environmental impacts statement is not required under NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] in connection with the transmission line, then a report comparable to an environmental impact statement in the format prescribed in 40 C.F.R. Section 1502.10”.

NEPA review, whether an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement, is required where a discretionary major federal action (e.g., a permit, easement) has the potential to have a significant impact on the human environment. This review always includes:

- (1) a description of a project,
- (2) an analysis of a study area that has the potential to be impacted by a project in terms of both natural and social resource issued,
- (3) an evaluation of potential effects of a project to both natural, social, and cultural resources and issues, and
- (4) potential alternatives and mitigations.

Similarly, the LCA jurisdiction and authorization by the PRC required that the wind projects prepare an environmental analysis of the existing environment of a project study area and potential impacts of a proposed project. Additionally, mitigation can be incorporated into project design in an environmental report to demonstrate that a project will comply with all applicable

environmental laws and regulations and will not unduly impair important environmental values (which include both natural resource and social issues).

The Environmental Reports submitted to the PRC evaluated whether that the SunZia Wind Project will not unduly impair important environmental values. Each report analyzes a large study area comprising the wind generation and transmission facilities including those of the SunZia Wind Project. Each Environmental Report provided an overview of resources within the study area as well as an analysis of potential impacts of the wind generation and transmission facilities. Additionally, a robust set of environmental protection measures addressing potential natural resource or social issues were built into the project design and incorporated as conditions of PRC siting approval in each LCA administrative proceeding. During the course of the four PRC LCA proceedings, Pattern developed additional environmental mitigations in collaboration with stakeholders that were also adopted as conditions of PRC LCA approval. Burns & McDonnell prepared the Environmental Reports for all PRC proceedings relating to the SunZia Wind Project. Burns & McDonnell and Pattern Energy provided testimony supplementing the Environmental Reports to support a PRC finding that the proposed projects would not unduly impair important environmental values, including but not limited to:

- (1) preservation of air quality and water quality;
- (2) preservation of land uses, soils, flora, and fauna; and
- (3) preservation of water resources, mineral resources, socioeconomic resources, cultural resources, historic resources, religious resources, visual resources, geologic resources, and geographic resources.¹

PRC approval was unanimous in each of the four PRC public siting proceedings (PRC Docket Numbers. 18-00065-UT, 20-00008-UT, 21-00281-UT, and 22-00101-UT).

All four of the Environmental Reports for the component projects of the SunZia Wind Project development were accepted by the PRC as meeting this statutory requirement and therefore, may be considered comparable to an environmental impact statement under NEPA.

The Environmental Reports, collectively addressing the social and environmental effects anticipated from the overall SunZia Wind Project identify study areas, have evaluations of existing conditions, environmental consequences of the proposed project, and identify environmental mitigations. The topics evaluated include social (e.g. residences, schools, cemeteries, etc.), natural (e.g. biological resources, noise, visual impacts), and cultural resources.

The table of contents of each Environmental Report as provided is as follows:

- 1.0 SUMMARY
- 2.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE AND NEED
 - 2.1 Purpose and Need
 - 2.2 Decisions to be Made
- 3.0 ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION
 - 3.1 Alternatives Considered
 - 3.2 Proposed Project (Proponent Preferred)

¹ NMAC 17.9.592.10(G).

- 4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT
 - 4.1 Introduction
 - 4.2 Air Resources
 - 4.3 Noise
 - 4.4 Geology and Mineral Resources
 - 4.5 Soil Resources
 - 4.6 Paleontological Resources
 - 4.7 Water Resources
 - 4.8 Flora and Fauna
 - 4.9 Archaeological and Historic-Age Cultural Resources
 - 4.10 Religious and Cemetery Sites
 - 4.11 Visual and Scenic Resources
 - 4.12 Land Use, Including Farm, Range, and Recreational Resources
 - 4.13 Socioeconomics
 - 4.14 Communication Signals
 - 4.15 Radioactive Waste and Radiation Hazards
 - 4.16 Hazardous Materials
 - 4.17 Safety
 - 4.18 Geographic Resources
 - 4.19 Military Activities and Aviation
 - 4.20 Roads
- 5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS
 - 5.1 Introduction
 - 5.2 Air Resources
 - 5.3 Noise
 - 5.4 Geology and Mineral Resources
 - 5.5 Soil Resources
 - 5.6 Paleontological Resources
 - 5.7 Water Resources
 - 5.8 Flora and Fauna
 - 5.9 Archaeological and Historic-Age Cultural Resources
 - 5.10 Religious and Cemetery Sites
 - 5.11 Visual and Scenic Resources
 - 5.12 Land Use, Including Farm, Range, and Recreational Resources
 - 5.13 Socioeconomics
 - 5.14 Communication Signals
 - 5.15 Radioactive Waste and Radiation Hazards
 - 5.16 Hazardous Materials
 - 5.17 Safety
 - 5.18 Geographic Resources
 - 5.19 Military Activities and Aviation
 - 5.20 Road
- 6.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION
- 7.0 LITERATURE CITED
- 8.0 INDEX

APPENDIX 1 - EXHIBITS

