

FOUR CORNERS WIND RESOURCE CENTER

TO: _____ County

From: Four Corners Wind Resource Center

Date: December 17, 2015

RE: Wind development and Utah legislative requirement for County Resource Management Planning

INTRODUCTION

The Four Corners Wind Resource Center (4CWRC) (www.fourcornerswind.org) provides no-cost support to local, state, and regional stakeholders in the Four Corners region. We offer expertise in wind regulation, development issues, and technology to support decision-making. In response to interest from many Utah counties, the 4CWRC developed this guidance document and draft language to assist Utah's counties in crafting the energy sections of their County Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

In 2015, the Utah State Legislature required counties to develop RMPs to provide guidance regarding the use of public lands within their boundaries. A link to the legislation is provided here: <http://le.utah.gov/~2015/bills/static/HB0323.html>. This legislation amends Utah Code Annotated §§ 17-27a-401, 403-405, 409; and § 17-34-6.

The State of Utah planning department historically supported the development of RMPs for counties, and their work, guidance and draft documents can be found here: <http://planning.utah.gov/CRMPEXamplePlan.htm>

Each county may take its own approach to fulfill the legislative requirements. One requirement, however, is to collaborate with neighboring counties and to articulate common goals. To this end, several multi-county Associations of Governments offer support to their member counties in the RMP process.

Their contact information can be found here:

- **Five County Association of Governments:** Phone:(435) 673-3548; Fax:(435) 673-3540; Address: 1070 W. 1600 S., Bldg. B; St. George, UT; <http://www.fivecounty.utah.gov/>
- **Six County Association of Governments:** Phone: (435) 893.0700; Fax: (435) 893-0701; Address: 250 N Main St. Richfield UT; <http://sixcounty.com/>
- **Mountainland Association of Governments:** Phone: (801) 229-3800; Fax: (801) 229-3801; Address: 586 E 800 N Orem, UT; <https://www.mountainland.org/>
- **Southeastern Utah Association of Local Governments:** Phone: (435) 637-5444; Fax: (435) 637-5448; Address: 375 S. Carbon Ave. (P.O. Box 1106) Price, UT 84501; <http://seualg.utah.gov/>



1014 2nd Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah
84103

PHONE: (928) 523-0715
EMAIL: karin.wadsack@nau.edu
WEBSITE: www.4cornerswind.org

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

According to Utah Code Annotated § 17-27a-401 *et seq.*, a county RMP must:

- 1) Include relevant findings pertaining to the energy resource;
- 2) Include clearly defined objectives pertaining to an energy resource;
- 3) Outline general policies and guidelines on how the objectives pertaining to an energy resource will be accomplished,
- 4) Identify common interests that a county shares with proximate counties regarding the energy resource; and
- 5) Establish consistent objectives and policies regarding common interests shared with proximate counties (to the greatest extent possible).

4CWRC DRAFT LANGUAGE

To assist counties in writing RMP language in accordance with statute, we provide the following sample language on renewable energy for your consideration:

- 1) *Include relevant findings pertaining to the energy resource:*¹
 - a) Development of the renewable energy resources in ___ County has the potential to be/is an important contributor to the economy of the county. Wind and solar resource development costs have dropped dramatically in the last several years. In many places, electricity from wind and solar resources is now cost competitive with all other sources of new electricity generation, and many existing sources of generation. Due to advancements in technology, better forecasting, and better controls, wind and solar energy can be economically developed in areas not previously thought possible.
 - i) Wind turbine technologies continue to improve and turbines are now able to generate economically competitive electricity in lower wind speed areas through the use of longer turbine blades, taller hub heights, and advanced controls. Also, improvements in wind resource forecasting, wind plant control technologies, and energy storage now allow wind plants to generate electricity at a smoother, more consistent rate than in the past. These factors enable more accurate predictions of output for management by the electric utilities that generate and/or purchase the power generated by wind projects.
 - ii) The cost of solar photovoltaic installations has fallen dramatically in recent years and continues to decline, making solar an increasingly economically attractive source of electricity.

¹ For item 1, each County should include:

- Wind resource and solar energy resource maps
- History of any development of wind or solar resources in the county, and
- Any previous goals, policies, or findings of the county with respect to wind energy (e.g. “X County encourages/supports/promotes increased use of renewable resources” or “X County finds that increased development of renewable energy resources would be an important economic development driver for the county”)



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- b) Utah has an abundance of developable wind and solar resources.
- i) In 2015, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory released new wind resource maps showing development potential across the state.
http://apps2.eere.energy.gov/wind/windexchange/wind_resource_maps.asp?stateab=ut
 - ii) As one of the seven sunniest states in the nation, Utah has an incredible solar resource and ___ County is perfectly situated to benefit from that resource. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Energy released solar photovoltaic resources maps showing solar potential across the state.
<http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/states/maps.cfm/state=UT>
- c) Several factors are contributing to growth in the market for wind and solar energy development across the country and in the West:
- i) There is increasing demand nationwide for renewable energy development, due to economic and policy drivers. Many Utah counties have ample ability to supply this demand with wind or solar projects at the utility scale.
 - ii) Increasing commitments to renewable energy in states throughout the west will drive demand and create competition for development of renewable resources.
 - iii) With the expansion of Energy Imbalance Markets in the West, higher levels of renewable energy can be managed by participating utility electrical systems. Thus, geographically dispersed renewable energy development, such as Utah based projects, can more easily contribute to local and regional energy needs and clean energy goals.
 - iv) Reduced use, partial unit closure, and retirement of fossil electricity generation plants create capacity on existing transmission lines, making it easier for renewable development projects to get energy resources to market.
- 2) *Include clearly defined objectives pertaining to an energy resource*
- a) E.g. The County supports the development of wind and solar energy at large and small scales, for generating electricity for sale or for use on site, on public and private lands throughout the county.
- 3) *Outline general policies and guidelines on how the objectives pertaining to an energy resource will be accomplished,*
- a) General statement example:
The County will establish policies, guidelines, and/or goals to support the development of wind and solar energy resources on public and private lands in the county.
 - b) Specific statement examples:
The County's wind and solar ordinances / general plan / zoning ordinances provide(s) specific policy and guidance on the development of distributed and/or utility-scale wind resources.
- 4) *Identify common interests that a county shares with proximate counties regarding the energy resource,² and*

² For items 4 and 5, Counties can work with regional organizations mentioned above.



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5) *Establish consistent objectives and policies regarding common interests shared with proximate counties (to the greatest extent possible).*

a) Statement examples:

Development of the renewable energy resources in the region is/has the potential to be an important contributor to the economic development of ____ County and neighboring counties. Neighboring counties that also support the development of wind and solar energy at large and small scales, for generating electricity for sale or for use on site, on public and private lands throughout the county include _____.

Neighboring counties that will/have establish(ed) policies, guidelines, and/or goals to support the development of wind and solar energy resources on public and private lands in the county include _____.

Please let me know if you have questions or would like more information.

Best Regards,



Karin Wadsack
Four Corners Wind Resource Center
Northern Arizona University



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Salt Lake City, Utah
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