

Letter to the Editor: *The El Dorado Times*

Winds farms are coming to Kansas. I am not against generating electricity with wind power, but I am concerned about placing wind generators on the Flint Hills.

People who live in the Flint Hills work long hours for little pay and their major reward is enjoying the view, the sight and sounds that nature provides and the stillness of the area.

The wind towers are 225 feet tall, lit with strobe lights, supporting three blades with a diameter of 200 feet. Overall visual height reaches 350 feet. The turbines rotate 15-20 revolutions per minute with tip speeds reaching 160 MPH or higher. The sound created has been compared to automobiles traveling down the highway. Future production models of wind turbines are larger, reaching heights of 500 feet.

The ecology of the hills can be fragile when extensively damaged. Installation of each tower requires steel reinforced concrete slabs 25 to 30 feet deep. A road will be constructed to each turbine and the electrical cables will be buried three feet underground. If these generators do not prove to be successful, clean up and restoring the grass takes years and can never be brought back to its original status. Placing structures on farm ground is less destructive as compared to the rocky Flint Hills.

These wind turbines are expensive, 1.2 to 1.5 million dollars each. Even if these turbines could operate constantly at maximum power, which they undoubtedly won't, to generate an equal amount of power as Wolf Creek Nuclear plant would require 790 turbines costing over one billion dollars. Wind farms operate in the area of 30-40% efficiency.

Wind generating companies are given a tax credit of 1.8 cents per kilowatt and the State of Kansas does not require any property tax on these structures.

Land owners are well paid for the placement of the towers. Many absentee landowners of Flint Hills' grassland are not affected by the sights and sounds of the turbines.

It would be unfortunate if the uniqueness of the Flint Hills is changed by giant, man-made pinwheels.

If you have any concerns about placement of wind turbines, plan on attending the special hearing of the Zilkha Renewable Energy Midwest #2, LLC, seeking a conditional use permit for a wind farm two miles east of Rosalia, Kansas. The exact date of the hearing has not been set but will be sometime after July 11, held in the Butler County Court House fourth floor meeting room. Questions and or comments can be directed to the Butler County Planning/Development office at (316)322-4325 or e-mail www.tkenemer.com

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