

Bill Cundiff

From: Robert Anders
Sent: Wednesday, June 29, 2011 4:16 PM
To: Bill Cundiff
Cc: SZisk@douglasma.org; Mlajoie@douglasma.org
Subject: setbacks

[Wind Watch: San Miguel County task force debates proposed 3-mile distance between homes and turbines](#)



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New Mexico

San Miguel County task force debates proposed 3-mile distance between homes and turbines

Information from: Las Vegas Optic, <http://www.lasvegasoptic.com> By Associated Press, www.kwgn.com 8 December 2010

A San Miguel County task force has proposed requiring a three-mile distance between homes and wind farms, but a county commissioner is concerned that such a large gap could discourage the industry from building in the area.

County Commissioner Nicholas Leger said Monday he supports a shorter distance but hasn't determined what that would be.

"You basically would be banning wind development. I don't think that's what we as a county want to do," Leger said.

The issue has been debated at public hearings as a Chicago-based company, Invenergy, considers whether to build a wind farm with dozens of turbines on Bernal mesa. The county is drafting a new wind ordinance that will replace a 2003 rule.

Bill Madison, owner of Madison Vineyards and Winery and a critic of wind-farm development in the Bernal area, said no one there opposes wind energy but that the towers would lower property values and create unwanted noise. He also said voters should decide the issue, not commissioners.

"If they moved them 15 miles south, where there is better wind, there would be no problem," Madison said.

Invenergy has recommended a 1,500-foot buffer, which is a little more than a quarter mile.

When the task force formed more than a year and a half ago, it first suggested an eight-mile setback distance. After that, county officials changed the makeup of the panel to include more wind-farm supporters and the proposed three-mile setback was suggested.

Leger said everyone needs to contribute to efforts to make the United States more energy independent, and he believes alternative energy such as wind farms are a key component.

But he said he's not endorsing any wind farm plan, and suggested that each should be evaluated individually.

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