



# United States Department of the Interior



## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

West Virginia Field Office  
694 Beverly Pike  
Elkins, West Virginia 26241

August 16, 2012

Re: Notice of Availability and Request for Public Comments on a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Habitat Conservation Plan for the Beech Ridge Energy Wind Power Project, West Virginia (Comments Due by October 23, 2012)

Dear Interested Party:

This is to notify you of the opportunity for public comment on a permit application. Beech Ridge Energy, LLC (BRE) has submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) an application for an incidental take permit pursuant to section 10 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. As part of its application package, BRE has prepared a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for its Beech Ridge Wind Energy Project (Project). Appendices to the HCP include an Implementing Agreement and a Research, Monitoring and Adaptive Management Plan.

The application and HCP address the potential incidental take of two federally listed endangered species that is reasonably anticipated to occur as a result of the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the Project, located in Greenbrier and Nicholas Counties, West Virginia. The two endangered species for which Beech Ridge requests an incidental take permit are the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and Virginia big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii virginianus*). The HCP includes conservation measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the effects of Project activities on these two species of endangered bats.

The Service is considering whether to issue a permit that would authorize take of the two endangered bats that is incidental to the otherwise lawful construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the Project during the 25-year period described in the HCP. Issuance of an incidental take permit by the Service would be contingent on implementation of the HCP and adherence to any permit conditions. To comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Service has prepared a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which evaluates the effects of the proposed action of issuing a permit, as well as the effects of alternative actions on the environment.

On August 24, 2012, the Service will publish a notice in the Federal Register officially announcing receipt of the application and availability of the HCP and draft EIS for public comment. Beginning on that day, you may obtain copies of the Federal Register notice, HCP, draft EIS, and appendices on the Internet at one of two locations:

- Service Web Site:  
[http://www.fws.gov/westvirginiafieldoffice/beeceh\\_ridge\\_wind\\_power.html](http://www.fws.gov/westvirginiafieldoffice/beeceh_ridge_wind_power.html)
- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>

The 60-day comment period closes on October 23, 2012. You can submit written comments by either of two methods:

- *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal (see URL above). In the Search box, enter FWS-R5-ES-2012-0059, which is the docket number. Then on the left side of the screen, under the Document Type heading, click on the Notices link to locate the documents and submit comments.
- *By hard copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R5-ES-2012-0059, Division of Policy and Directives Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM, Arlington, Virginia 22203.

Thank you for your interest in this permit application. Should you have questions, please contact Laura Hill of this office at (304) 636-6586, Ext. 18.

Sincerely,



Deborah Carter  
Field Supervisor