

SENATE BILL NO. 287—SENATOR RHODS

MARCH 21, 2011

Referred to Committee on Natural Resources

SUMMARY—Expresses opposition to the location of a proposed wind power project on Mount Wilson and Table Mountain. (BDR S-216)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: No.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets [omitted-material] is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to wind power projects; expressing opposition to the location of a proposed wind power project on Mount Wilson and Table Mountain; making recommendations for future action regarding the project; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

1 This bill expresses opposition to a proposed wind power project primarily
2 located on Mount Wilson and Table Mountain in the Ely District of the Bureau of
3 Land Management and recommends that an alternative site be used for this project.
4 Additionally, this bill recognizes the environmental and cultural significance of
5 Mount Wilson and Table Mountain, and that the construction and operation of wind
6 turbines on Mount Wilson and Table Mountain would adversely affect the
7 indigenous animal and plant species of that region and interfere with the various
8 public uses of that land.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 **Section 1.** The Legislature hereby finds and declares that:
2 1. The State of Nevada has an interest in developing alternative
3 sources of energy, including renewable energy derived from wind
4 power, which are cost-effective, which minimally affect the
5 environment and which preserve the natural resources of the State;
6 2. Mount Wilson, which is located in the Wilson Creek Range
7 in Lincoln County, and Table Mountain, which is located in the



1 Monitor Range in Nye County, are culturally and historically
2 significant, are renowned for their diverse indigenous animal and
3 plant species, and are distinct for their scenic landscapes;

4 3. Mount Wilson and Table Mountain are cherished by
5 Nevadans who enjoy using the land for hunting, hiking, recreation
6 and other outdoor activities;

7 4. A wind power project currently proposed in Lincoln County
8 and Nye County would require the use of 31,000 acres, primarily on
9 Mount Wilson and Table Mountain, and the construction of 350
10 wind turbines that are between 211 and 325 feet in height, 178 miles
11 of access roads and 50 miles of overhead transmission line;

12 5. The infrastructure necessary to build and operate the wind
13 turbines will require the construction of numerous roads through
14 steep terrain, the removal of millions of tons of soil and the
15 destruction of native vegetation and fauna;

16 6. The wind power project will destroy the wilderness qualities
17 of Mount Wilson and Table Mountain and negatively affect the
18 habitats of numerous animal species that rely on this land to breed,
19 to forage for food and as a migratory corridor;

20 7. Mount Wilson and Table Mountain have been designated by
21 the Bureau of Land Management as crucial fawning grounds for
22 mule deer and elk;

23 8. Mount Wilson and Table Mountain are breeding grounds for
24 the greater sage-grouse, a popular game bird that has been identified
25 by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as a candidate for
26 protection as an endangered species; and

27 9. The wind power project could be located at an alternative
28 site, thereby minimizing the environmental footprint of the project
29 and preserving the culturally significant and environmentally
30 diverse areas of Mount Wilson and Table Mountain.

31 **Sec. 2.** Based upon the findings expressed in section 1 of this
32 act, the Legislature hereby recommends that:

33 1. A more suitable location for the wind power project than
34 Mount Wilson and Table Mountain should be found in Nevada;

35 2. The Lincoln County Board of Commissioners and the
36 Nevada Grazing Board of District No. 4 should be involved in all
37 phases of any wind power project in Lincoln County, including,
38 without limitation, the planning, construction, operation and
39 decommission phases of such a project;

40 3. The Nye County Board of Commissioners should be
41 involved in all phases of any wind power project in Nye County,
42 including, without limitation, the planning, construction, operation
43 and decommission phases of such a project; and

44 4. Any wind power project proposed in the Ely District or the
45 Battle Mountain District of the Bureau of Land Management be



- 1 situated in contemplation of the location's cultural significance,
- 2 indigenous plants and animals, multiple public uses and
- 3 accessibility.
- 4 **Sec. 3.** This act becomes effective upon passage and approval.

