

Las Vegas Sun

# Lawsuit challenges plans for Nevada wind energy farm

By [Steve Green](#)

Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2011 | 1:19 p.m.

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Environmental groups and Indian tribes sued the federal government Tuesday, challenging plans for a \$260 million wind energy farm planned near eastern Nevada's Great Basin National Park.

A lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court for Nevada against the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the government agency that approved the plan for windmills called the Spring Valley Wind Energy Facility.

The developer is designing the farm to minimize the deaths of bats and birds and other environmental impacts, the BLM said in approving the project.

Critics disagree with the assessment.

"Despite very significant and unknown environmental and cultural impacts, and against the advice of several sister agencies and its own personnel, BLM refused to conduct the full environmental analysis required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Instead, under pressure from high-level BLM officials and the industry proponent, BLM rushed through a short-cut analysis in order to meet arbitrary funding deadlines desired by the industry," charges the lawsuit, filed by the Western Watersheds Project, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation, the Duckwater Shoshone Tribe and the Ely Shoshone Tribe.

The lawsuit claims other consequences of the farm include infringements on lands Indians use for cultural, religious and traditional purposes. The suit asks the court to block development of the windmill farm until the BLM better studies its environmental impacts.

The BLM, in approving the project in October, said it's planned for sparsely-populated Spring Valley in White Pine County, 30 miles east of Ely, and would be developed on federal land by Houston company Spring Valley Wind LLC. That's a subsidiary of Pattern Energy Group LP of San Francisco.

The 149.1-megawatt wind facility on up to 8,565 acres would include 75 wind turbines and an electrical substation. NV Energy has agreed to buy electricity from the farm under a 20-year agreement announced last February. Similar-sized farms around the country can serve about 45,000 homes.

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