

Foreword

Wyoming is a state of energy booms: oil, coal, natural gas, uranium, and most recently, wind energy development. Wind energy capacity in Wyoming has increased from 288 megawatts (MW) in 2007 to over 1,400 MW at the end of 2010—an increase of almost 500 percent. In addition, nearly 7,900 MW of new wind projects are in the queue. Wind facilities are being built every year, as can be seen by the towers and turbines transported along the Interstate 80 corridor. Recent Wyoming legislative sessions have had multiple bills introduced relating to wind energy, resulting in new and different regulations, taxation structures, and assurances and procedures for wind developers, landowners, and counties hosting wind farms.

To keep on top of these developments, the Ruckelshaus Institute of Environment and Natural Resources, the School of Energy Resources, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the College of Law at the University of Wyoming have updated this guide for landowners seeking information on commercial wind energy development. The guide maintains the original aim of the 2009 edition, in that it outlines the process of wind energy development for landowners and highlights some of the key issues that they may face throughout the wind energy development process. It expands on this, however, to provide important updates on the growing practice of landowner wind energy associations and the changing legislative landscape in the state. For example, in 2011 the Wyoming State Legislature passed the Wind Energy Rights Act, which provides more certainty to both landowners and developers by defining the nature of wind energy rights and attaching those rights to surface property.

It is our hope that this guide will inform not only landowners but also other stakeholders in wind energy in Wyoming so that we can continue to develop wind in our state in a way that is beneficial to landowners, communities, and the environment.

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