



Texas Landowners Opposing Wind

Update On Status of Brown and Coleman County Wind Farm Project April 2019

Hello friends and neighbors. In an effort to keep landowners apprised of the latest information regarding the proposed wind energy project in Brown and Coleman Counties, we will be sending out updates quarterly. This is our second update for 2019 and is current as of the end of April 2019.

It has been a little over a year now since this proposed wind project first came to light in our counties. Early in 2018 the wind leasing company began to solicit landowners for a 5 year option on their land that would convert to a 60 year lease if construction began on a wind project. This lease, as provided to landowners by the company, was for an easement providing full access to leased properties below, surface and above ground. It included the right to clear land and construct and operate transmission lines, turbines, roads, warehouses or other buildings as the wind company saw a need. The landowner was provided no legal say in where, when or how these easements were used so long as the activity pertained to wind energy.

We are happy to say that we have seen a dramatic drop in activity from the energy company regarding this project. This is a direct result of your opposition to the project. We believe that the wind company has fallen well short of the acreage needed for a subsequent investor/developer to be interested in building a wind installation. The total optioned acres recorded as of this date is 12,843. Only 2,976 of this is contiguous to the Brown County substation. The rest of the optioned acres are fragmented and scattered across southwestern Brown and southeastern Coleman Counties. The energy company has stated they need a minimum of 25,000 acres with access to the substation. In essence, opposed landowners have cut them off and hemmed them in to where they were not able to develop a viable project. That said, the company's representatives have approached some landowners requesting underground transmission easements. This would allow them to stitch together some of these fragmented optioned acres. To date, we are not aware of any landowners whom have agreed to such an easement and we encourage landowners to continue to oppose any such agreements that would bring wind turbines to Brown or Coleman County.

In addition to limiting the acres available for this project, we have also focused our efforts on ensuring our County Commissioners, County Judges and School Board Members are aware of the opposition to this project by the voters and landowners. This also has been very successful. However, we must continue to ensure that our elected officials hear from their constituents to ensure they continue to oppose any tax abatement that does not bring jobs and economic development to Brown and Coleman Counties.

Recently we have also become aware of interest from solar energy companies in our area. In fact, the current wind company has contacted some owners who would not execute leases for wind turbines asking if they would consider a solar lease. This too is a result of the landowners and residents of our counties showing their opposition to wind farms and tax abatements. Depending on the location, solar projects could have less impact on our beautiful hill country. Solar does not require the magnitude of land that wind installation requires, but they do still require our tax dollars in the form of a property tax abatement. Like wind, for these millions of dollars in tax abatements, our counties will see no long-term economic or job benefit. Our focus has been on keeping the damaging impacts of wind installations out of our county. But in the process, we have learned how these multinational corporations are benefiting from our tax breaks without contributing to our local economy and jobs. The property tax codes that allow for these tax abatements, Chapters 312 & 313, were designed to allow rural towns and counties to entice businesses to locate and grow in those areas adding jobs and economic impact. However, this does not happen with renewable installations. In Texas, according the Texas Public Policy Foundation, 87% of all waivers on the job requirements under Chapter 312 & 313 are provided to renewable energy companies. We point this out to ensure residents know that while solar is less intrusive on our lives, the use of our tax dollars without benefit to our towns and counties is still an issue that our residents and landowners must not allow.

Our counties are beautiful places that we must protect. To this end, we ask for your help by doing the following:

- 1) Contact your Commissioners, Judges and School Board members to ensure they understand the overwhelming opposition. You can find this contact information on our website.
- 2) Let us know if you are a landowner who is opposed to this project. You can use the Contact Us link on our website.
- 3) Talk to your neighbors. Share information with them and let them know your position.
- 4) Place a No Turbines sign on your property. These are free and can be obtained by using the Contact Us on our website.

Thank you for your support.