

CLASS and New Revenue from Wind Power Projects Seattle Conference 2009

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Benefits to Both Parties

- Whether on trust or private lands, with an estimated turbine value of \$2,500,000, wind projects are making substantial additions to the region's property tax base – it would be \$9 billion if all 7,900 MW of existing projects had been constructed with modern equipment – see the Desert Claim handout for a local success story.
- Tax base effects are further enhanced by annual royalty payments to trust land managers and private landowners which average between \$2,000 and \$8,000 per turbine/per year, depending on when leases were signed.
- These stable, long-term increases to personal income and the wind project's "buying down" of tax levies also facilitate proposing and passing special tax levies.
- Other benefits to the local tax base come from the 150-200 construction jobs and 6-10 permanent jobs for each new 100 MW project.
- Tax and royalty payment numbers could expand dramatically in the next several years, with the possibility of hundreds of thousands of new wind power megawatts in the Western CLASS states adding up to hundreds of millions of dollars added to mostly rural tax bases, with proportionate increases in local royalty payments to trust and private lands owners.

Preserving the Momentum

- State and local land use permitting can either improve or eliminate a site's development potential along with its financial benefits to the local districts.
- This applies to individual projects as well as the transmission line proposals that are essential to the next stage of wind power development.
- Permitting issues, especially those relating to sage grouse, are a major area affecting development potential in the next round of wind power sites.
- School boards, school superintendents, and parent groups – which typically overlap with landowners in rural areas – are the invaluable advocates for addressing these siting issues.

What Can Be Done Right Now

- Promote state and county land use permitting that encourages responsible development by providing well-defined steps for the developer to follow – multiple models exist.
- CLASS members can participate in trust hearings related to responsible wind projects as part of the process of "educating and advocating on behalf of trust school children for prudent and profitable management of the school trust lands and permanent funds."