

# Turbines could be concern for military training areas, DOD says

BY ANNE ADAMS • STAFF WRITER

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MONTEREY — Highland New Wind Development's proposal for a wind energy facility on Allegheny Mountain has over the last few months raised questions about whether such an industrial plant would interfere with military training routes.

The Evers Military Operations Area straddles western Highland, and Pendleton and Pocahontas counties in West Virginia. The two nearby sites for a wind plant owned by H.T. "Mac" McBride and his family are situated within this area, and in the path of at least one training route.

U.S. Department of Defense press officer Glen Flood says the military would indeed be concerned about such a project. "We call it encroachment," he told *The Recorder* this week, explaining the military's term for an increase in any type of development in an MOA, including residential building and or even structures adorned with lighting. "We as a department are very concerned about encroachment — any kind of development that can adversely impact training."

Flood says though the U.S. Air Force would have to decide whether a wind facility here would be detrimental to training, he believes there would be objection. "These planes (fighter jets) fly what we call the nap of the earth — very close to the ground. And this project could very well be a distraction ... We're running out of training grounds, and wind farms in the last 10 years have been a big issue," he said.

Lt. Tina Carlsen at Langley Air Force base says the USAF has not yet been told about this project. Normally, she said, a company like HNWD would first contact the Federal Aviation Administration; the FAA contacts any flying organizations, including the military, as it reviews a construction application. Also, she noted, flights from Langley do not fly I-routes, only V-routes. Both kinds traverse the Evers MOA. A V-route is a "visual route," used by pilots who simply look out the window for visual cues. I-routes are used by pilots who are depending on instruments for guidance. When pilots fly a visual route, Carlsen says, they are given a briefing ahead of time. "Throughout a route, there are usually a lot of changes," she said. "If there's one particular thing they need to avoid, they are given a lat and long (latitude and longitude of the obstacle), and can then fly over or around it." Generally, she said, VR 1754, one that crosses Allegheny Mountain, is clear from surface to 15,000 feet. Fleet Area Control and Surveillance, the facility that oversees routes in Virginia, told Carlsen under these kinds of circumstances, "they just try to work it out."

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