**COMMENT LETTER—DUE OCTOBER 20**

Background:

Our goal is to help the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Department of the Interior understand your connections to Minidoka and the types of impacts that the massive wind project will have on you, your families, the Japanese American community and partners.

The purpose of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is to enable decision makers to take a “hard look” at the impacts of LS Power’s proposal on the environment.

During the scoping period, we want to identify the types of impacts that will need to be studied in the draft EIS next year.

Please focus your comments on what the wind project means to you and your families. Our partners in the conservation and historic preservation communities will comment on the proposals impact on other natural and cultural resources.

In addition to the environmental impacts, we want to help key decision makers and elected officials understand the emotional pain caused by the U.S. Government’s decision to incarcerate Japanese Americans during World War II. We seek to convey that the pain continues to this day, while understanding it might be too painful to share that pain in public comments.

We want to convey the importance of Minidoka and other sites of conscience to advance the cause of racial justice and healing and the impact of the proposal on you and your family.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS. YOUR STORIES MATTER!

How to Comment:

* The deadline to have your public comment included is **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20th!**
* For more information, please check the BLM website: [https://go.usa.gov/xFKxg](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001uI7mExIuLhfhQVrLSInSy3-H4nIJrqRx9pWR_0vcMSuLP42urCEdQJWDp63S_3xTOMxQtQ1UFXXY8-76EAIzA84k65MyhO5wRcHMT4hH_4FcZ49YEAzoA8u7A2rSK-ir0mTQTmC_EFbNvXfbOEXDLg==&c=tH6Yi7_97jC7wz6tx2JnzpFmjTmWzvuAWaZHmyJV-Ghp-2JYtL2xVg==&ch=sYO-T7bNQHEnkxDdp5OXAMKyZ3Km8aYnFX9jmptnU0KyQPoQWSh5sA==).
* Please email your comments to: BLM\_ID\_LavaRidge@blm.gov
* Or mail them to: Kasey Prestwich, Project Manager, BLM Shoshone Field Office, 400 West F Street, Shoshone, ID 83352 (Must be postmarked by October 20th) Tel. 208-732-7204
* Please note that your comments will be included in the public record and available for review by people outside the government.
* Please CC or share copies of your letters with:
	+ Friends of Minidoka at info@minidoka.org
	+ Minidoka Pilgrimage Committee: at minidokapilgrimage@gmail.com
	+ Your members of Congress
* With your approval, we may ask to use your stories as part of the fight against the proposal.
* In addition to letters, you can submit photos and videos to be included in the record. The BLM can accept comments with up to 20 MB of attachments. If the photos and videos exceed 20 MB and are available in the public domain, you can reference them in your comments. Please add the context associated with any photos or videos.

We suggest the following three-part format:

* Suggested talking points
* Your personal stories (if you wish)
* Closing

 Suggested talking points:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments to the Bureau of Land Management regarding LS Power’s Lava Ridge Wind Project.

The Minidoka National Historic Site is sacred land to me and my family.

Established as a National Monument in 2001 and designated as a National Historic Site by Congress, the National Park unit acknowledges the injustice of U.S. Government actions against Japanese Americans in World War II.

For over 20 years, the National Park Service’s stewardship of the site has served as a source of strength and healing for Japanese Americans and other people of color who have suffered injustice at the hands of our own government.

Minidoka also provides educational opportunities for the public to learn that prejudice against the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities is not new. It is part of a network of Japanese American camps and other sites of conscience, managed by the National Park Service (NPS) for the benefit of current and future generations.

By law, the National Park Service is required to manage the park’s fundamental resources and values unimpaired for future generations. As stated in the Park’s Foundation Document, these values include:

* **Environmental Setting**: “Minidoka’s remote location in the high desert of Idaho provides an immersive setting that is fundamental to the visitor experience. Views of open fields and distant mountains create a sense of isolation on a vast landscape where Minidoka once stood…Extreme changes in temperature, the arid environment, and high winds that the people at Minidoka experienced are part of the environmental setting that are felt today. Experiencing this environmental setting allows visitors to better understand and connect to the daily lives at Minidoka.”
* **Commemoration and Healing:** Minidoka provides a place “… for engagement, reflection, and healing. These sites provoke connections to individuals affected by the World War II exclusion, forced removal, and unjust incarceration, and serves to commemorate those who survived this difficult chapter of American history.”
* **Public Understanding, Education, and Involvement: “**Educating and engaging the public in understanding the history of the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, the fragile nature of civil rights, and the need to protect civil and constitutional rights in the United States is essential...At Minidoka, special events such as the pilgrimage and the civil liberties symposium connect the public to the history that occurred here and its significance today.“

LS Power, a New York private equity firm, is seeking BLM approval to build 400 wind towers as high as 740 feet tall just north of Minidoka, with several towers located on the historic footprint of the camp.

Approximately 340 towers will be visible from the park on a clear day. They will form a visual wall of towers that will dominate about one third of the park’s 360 degree viewshed. Each of the towers could be be taller than the Space Needle (604 feet).  With turbine blades the length of the wingspan of a Boeing 747, each of the 340 towers visible from the park will create a visual impact equivalent to a 747 wing rotating on the Space Needle.

The NPS has stated that the towers "will fundamentally change the psychological and physical feelings of remoteness and isolation one experiences when visiting Minidoka NHS."

By surrounding Minidoka with hundreds of giant wind turbines, the project would make it hard for me to draw strength and solace from annual pilgrimages. It will make it hard to experience that same sense of remoteness and isolation experience by Japanese Americans during World War II.

Personal stories:

Please consider writing about you/your family history including information about you or your family members. Camp survivors can write in the first person with “I” statements. The model below is written in the third person, as a descendant. This is just a model. If you have provided this information in another format, e.g. oral history or statement, please let us know.

Your story is unique and powerful. Please put as much detail as you are comfortable with sharing.

* Place where they lived before camp. “My mom lived in Bellevue, Washington before the war. Her parents cleared the land for a strawberry farm.”
* What happened after Executive Order 9066. “The government imprisoned my mom and her family, my grandparents, in the Puyallup fairgrounds, where they lived in horse stables. They lost the farm because they couldn’t pay taxes and it was developed.”
* Describe camp life and how it affected you/your family. “Camp was really hard for her. My grandparents never recovered.”
* Please include your camp address.
* Describe what happened after camp. “She settled in Chicago, where she became a teacher. She never talked about her experience. It was too painful for her.”
* Describe your experiences at Minidoka and what it means to you. “My mom and I attended pilgrimages in 2005 and 2007, before she passed. While it was painful, it gave her a sense of closure. She was gratified by the U.S. government’s acknowledgment that what happened to her was wrong and that the American people can learn from our story to prevent it from happening again.”
* Describe your future plans. “I plan to go to the next pilgrimage. It will help me with the grief from losing my mom and the pain from the recent violence against the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. I want my children to understand my mom’s story including the courage it took to endure in camp, but also the impact it had on her. It helps to be with other people at pilgrimage who have suffered terrible pain, mostly in silence, for almost 80 years.”
* Describe the impacts that these towers would have on you when you visit the site in the future.

Closing statement:

 LS Power’s proposal would dishonor our nation’s acknowledgment that the incarceration of Japanese Americans was wrong.

 It will destroy Minidoka’s ability to commemorate our parents and grandparents and serve as a place of healing and learning.

 It will desecrate sacred ground.