

**SOCIETY OF
ARCHITECTURAL
HISTORIANS**

10 April 2020

Mr. Mark J. Wieringa
Rail Tie Wind Project
Western Area Power Administration
Headquarters Office A9402
P. O. Box 281213
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213

Re: Opposition to the Rail Tie Wind Project and the Ames Monument

Dear Mr. Wieringa:

The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) opposes the Rail Tie Wind Project as currently designed. Although SAH generally supports the use of renewable energy-generating systems, in this specific case the installation of the proposed wind farm will negatively affect the integrity of the Ames Monument, a listed National Historic Landmark (NHL). The Ames Monument, a simple stone pyramid sited on a treeless plain just south of Laramie, Wyoming, marks what was then the highest point on the First Transcontinental Railroad, itself a truly massive feat of engineering that united the country, formally opening the American West to commerce and settlement. Siting of turbine towners in the northern parts of the Bath Family Ltd. Partnership and TruBac Vac LLC parcels is likely to cause significant damage to the setting of this unique historic monument.

The Ames Monument marks the historic joining of the nation's first transcontinental rail line, and memorializes Oakes Ames and Oliver Ames, Jr., the Union Pacific Railroad financiers whose vision made this audacious project possible. The pyramidal structure was designed, sited, and created by three internationally famous designers: landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead, architect Henry Hobson Richardson, and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Its location was carefully chosen for its grand, unobstructed views. The monument itself was sited to face Sherman, once a bustling rail town now represented by a few foundations and a small cemetery. The remains of the original rail line itself are still visible on the landscape as well. Together these represent a singular yet highly significant moment in the American story, when the settled East and the "wild" West were joined by an improbably thin, double line of metal rails.

SAH does not oppose the siting of a wind energy farm, but rather strongly encourages additional study of the potential impacts to this historic landscape and the monument that defines it as part of a more comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement. Thoughtful, inclusive planning and refinement of the design could allow the avoidance of negative effects on the Ames Monument and its surroundings, while resulting in no fewer turbines or lower energy output.

Sincerely,



Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D., LEED AP BD+C
Chair, Society of Architectural Historians Heritage Conservation Committee

cc: Mr. Kenneth Breisch, Ph.D.; Mr. Jeffrey Cody, Ph.D.; Mr. Anthony Cohn, AIA; Ms. Phyllis Ellin; Mr. David Fixler, FAIA; Mr. Sandy Isenstadt, Ph.D.; Mr. Theodore H. Prudon, Ph.D., FAIA, Ms. Pauline Saliga; Ms. Deborah Slaton; Members SAH Heritage Conservation Committee.