



ENVIRONMENT

Administration close to finalizing rule to give wind farms a pass on killing eagles

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A wind farm in Colorado is shown here. (AP Photo)



The Obama administration is moving toward finalizing a rule that would give alternative energy farms a pass for killing bald and golden eagles for decades, just weeks after it took legal action for the first time against a company for doing so.

The rule by the Interior Department extends the length of the permits that

allow farms to unintentionally kill the eagles without penalty from five to 30 years, according to department records.

The rule authorizes the “non-purposeful” killing of eagles, but also will require farms to implement certain guidelines to help with eagle conservation. The White House finalized its review of the rule Thursday, *The Hill* reports.

An official with the Interior Department tells *The Hill* the department has been working for more than a year on the proposal with stakeholders.

The Obama administration, which has been a big supporter of green energy initiatives, faced backlash in August from environmental groups over the 30-year permit proposal. *The Hill* reports supporters argued the White House needed to better research the effects alternative energy companies could have on the environment.

The administration last month also prosecuted its first case against an energy company for killing 14 golden eagles, which get sucked into the farm’s wind turbines accidentally while they are hunting prey.

Duke Energy agreed to pay \$1 million for killing the birds over the past three years at two Wyoming wind farms. The company pled guilty to misdemeanor charges under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act

A study by federal biologists this year found that wind energy facilities in 10 states had killed at least 67 golden and bald eagles since 2008, according to the Associated Press.

The Associated Press contributed to this report