

Neutrality Questioned

EDITORIAL

The Alameda County Planning Department has nominated Dale Strickland, a consultant based in Wyoming, to monitor the Altamont raptor plan.

The plan seeks to reduce the high incidence of birds flying into the wind turbines. Raptors, including numerous golden eagles, have been cut down by the hundreds in the Altamont.

The planning department says it's aiming for an "intensive, scientifically rigorous and independent" monitoring program.

If that goal is to be met, a more neutral consultant than Dale Strickland must be hired, states Jeff Miller of the Center for Biological Diversity.

Miller points out in a press release that Strickland is an executive with the Cheyenne based Western EcoSystems Technology, whose clients include some of the Altamont wind power companies that he would be monitoring.

Many environmentalists believe the Altamont plan is itself too friendly to industry needs and won't stop the killing.

With that shadow already hovering over the plan, the county needs to take pains that the all-important monitoring is neutral and unbiased.

Dale Strickland's professionalism may be impeccable.

However, he is too close to the industry to be acceptable for the Altamont monitoring.