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Project overview

We are developing a wind energy project in Columbia County, Wisconsin. Wind projects let us deliver safe, reliable energy to customers without emitting greenhouse gases. We expect this proposed project to generate enough clean, low-cost energy to power nearly 100,000 homes annually. This project will provide significant economic benefits to the community through the total capital investment, the creation of construction and operations jobs, and landowner leases and aid payments.

Typical development timeline: Three-six years

Typical construction timeline: One year

Estimated size: 277 megawatts

Estimated number of turbines: 47

Annual estimated production: 813,942 megawatt-hours

Homes powered: Approximately 100,000 annually

Shared revenue estimate:

- Township/s = $785,683* annually
- County = $600,815 * annually

*Actual amounts will be determined by the state. Estimated values are for a 250-megawatt wind project. The shared revenue is subject to change pending the size of the project.

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Economic benefits

Wind energy supports local economies.

- The Columbia Wind Project has the potential to deliver:
  - An estimated 100-150 or more local construction jobs in Columbia County.
  - Dollars spent in the local community during construction, which supports local businesses like hotels/motels, gas stations and convenience stores, restaurants and more.
  - Landowner lease payments often spent locally further supports economic activity in the community.

Wind energy in Wisconsin provides shared utility revenue payments.

- Taxation for wind farm projects in Wisconsin is based on the revenue sharing formula, set in place through Wisconsin state legislation.
- The owner of a qualifying wind project will be required to pay the state an annual license fee based on the gross revenue from the sale of electricity. The state then allocates funds to communities that host electrical generation. The total annual shared revenue payment is up to $5,000 per megawatt (MW), split between the hosting county and the hosting towns.

Wind energy provides an increase in local tax revenues.

- Columbia Wind will have a nameplate capacity of 277 MW, which equates to a total of $41.5 million in total tax revenue generated over the project's lifespan.
  - Equation for revenues created: $5,000 x 277 MW x 30 years = $41,595,000

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Engineering and environmental facts

Wind projects go through extensive evaluations and conduct numerous studies and surveys to ensure turbines are properly sited, specifically to minimize impacts to the environment and local wildlife. Local and state permitting authorities, the state's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and other state and federal agencies review and scrutinize each project. The extensive review process ensures projects are sited in a way that mitigates negative impacts on the environment. Study results are included in a project's permit application with the permitting authority.

Here is a short list of some of the required studies and surveys our proposed project will undergo:

GEOTECHNICAL

This is an evaluation of soil and subsurface conditions relevant to construction.

SOUND MODELING

We monitor existing ambient sound levels before construction to understand baseline data. We use that data to determine the level of turbine-only contribution that would not exceed the applicable state standard at nearby homes.

SHADOW FLICKER

We pay special attention to shadow flicker, which generally occurs near sunrise and sunset and lasts only a few minutes. A flicker analysis ensures proper planning and siting to minimize the effect. Wisconsin permitting limits shadow flicker to no more than 30 hours (cumulative) per year at structures intended for human habitation.

SETBACKS

We carefully consider turbine placement for setbacks from roads, rail lines, natural gas lines, structures and homes, and other considerations. We'll design the project with a house setback of at least 1,250 feet . Distances may vary depending on the overall layout of the Columbia Wind project.

WILDLIFE HABITATS

Experts study bird (including s) and bat populations, and their activities and migration patterns in the proposed environment. They conduct these multiyear studies to understand species present and associated behavior and habitat use within the project area. Experts then share this information with agencies to help make informed decisions about turbine locations and operating practices.

AIRSPACE AND TELECOMM.

Wind projects also go through several federal reviews to make sure turbines don't interfere with aviation, radar, or local communication signals. As part of this process, we work with the FAA, FCC, and NTIA. These agencies look at turbine height, nearby flight paths, and existing communication routes. Mapping and technical studies help confirm each turbine is safely placed, including evaluation of FAA approved lighting systems such as Aircraft Detection Lighting Systems (ADLS). Together, these reviews ensure the project fits smoothly within local airspace and communication systems.

WETLANDS AND WATERWAYS

These studies identify the location and extent of any wetlands and waterways within the project area.

ROAD CONDITIONS

We conduct a review of local road conditions prior to construction to ensure project construction has no detrimental impact on local roadways. A road use agreement is typically executed between the developer and local governing entities to guarantee roads are repaired if necessary and returned to preproject conditions following construction.

CULTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL OR HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The project team works with the Wisconsin DNR Natural Heritage Inventory System (NHIS) reports and maps to determine if there are cultural, archaeological or historical sites within or near the project footprint.