



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



ISSUED: FEBRUARY 3, 2010

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE,
PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCOPING MEETING**

In the Matter of the Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC, Applications for a Large Wind Energy Conversion System Site Permit and a Certificate of Need for the Pleasant Valley Wind Project in Dodge and Mower Counties.

**Site Permit and Certificate of Need Applications
PUC Docket Numbers: IP-6828/WS-09-1197 and IP-6828/CN-09-937**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Office of Energy Security Energy Facilities Permitting (EFP) staff will hold a public information and environmental report scoping meeting on the applications submitted by Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC (Applicant), a wholly owned subsidiary of Renewable Energy Systems Americas Inc. (RES Americas), to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) for a Site Permit and Certificate of Need (CN) to build and operate the Pleasant Valley Wind Project (Project).

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2010
2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.**

**Each meeting will present the same information and opportunity
for public discussion so you need only to attend one meeting.**

**WINDMILL HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER
120 State Highway 16
Dexter, Minnesota 55926**

The purpose of the public meeting is to provide information about the proposed Project and to take public comment and input on the Pleasant Valley Wind Site Permit Application, issues to be considered in developing the Draft Site Permit, and on the scope of the Environmental Report (ER). EFP staff will provide an overview of the state's wind energy permitting process. The public is invited to review the Project applications, learn more about the Commission review process, make comments, and ask questions, including suggestions about alternatives to the Project and impacts to address in the ER. Representatives from RES Americas will be available to answer questions about the Project. **Prior to the public information meeting, the Applicant will host an open house beginning at 1:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. (a half hour prior to the public meeting) at the Windmill Hotel and Conference Center.**

Project Description

Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC, proposes a Large Wind Energy Conversion System (LWECS) of 300 MW using between 130 and 200 utility scale wind turbine generators, depending on what turbines are ultimately selected. Turbines between 1.5 MW and 2.3 MW in nameplate capacity are under consideration. Two turbine models are under consideration; each has a hub height of 80 meters (262 feet). In addition to the wind turbines, the Project would include access roads, six temporary and two permanent meteorological towers, electrical collection system, three substations, and three transmission lines. Two substations will step up the voltage from the 34.5 kV feeder lines to the 138 kV high voltage lines and a third substation will step up the voltage from the 138 kV high voltage lines to a 345 kV high voltage line that will be adjacent to the existing Great River Energy's Pleasant Valley substation. A 6.4 mile 138 kV high voltage transmission line will extend from the north substation and a 7.0 mile 138 kV high voltage transmission line will extend from the south substation, which will both connect to the third proposed substation. A 345 kV high voltage transmission line of less than one half mile in length will be constructed from the third proposed substation to the Pleasant Valley substation. The Applicant expects to begin commercial operation in December 2012.

Proposed Site Location

The Project area (shown in the accompanying map) consists of approximately 70,000 acres located in southern Dodge and northern Mower counties in Hayfield and Vernon townships of Dodge County and Waltham, Sargeant, Pleasant Valley, Red Rock, and Dexter townships of Mower County. A small portion of the Project is located in Rock Dell Township of Olmstead County. The Project area is located six miles northeast of the city of Austin and approximately 15 miles west of Rochester. Approximately 52,000 acres within the Project area are under the Applicant's control via wind easements. The Applicant has easements providing site control of over 99 percent of the required land for all turbines and infrastructure associated with the Project area.

Eminent Domain for Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC

The Applicant does not have the power of eminent domain to acquire the land or wind rights for the Project. Wind and land rights necessary to build the facility must be in the form of voluntary easements or lease agreements between individual landowners and the Applicant.

Commission Review Process

Two separate Commission approvals are required to build a LWECS larger than 50 MW. A project developer must obtain a CN under Minnesota Statutes section 216B.243 and a Site Permit under Minnesota Statutes Chapter 216F.

The Applicant filed its CN application on October 27, 2009, and its Site Permit application on November 23, 2009. The Commission accepted both applications as complete on December 23, 2009, and January 19, 2010, respectively. The applications are available on the Commission's website and from the Applicant's representative listed below. Landowners and governmental units inside the LWECS boundary will receive a copy of the Site Permit application directly from the Applicant.

The EFP staff is responsible for conducting a public meeting and environmental review for the CN application under Minnesota Rule 7849.1400. After the public meeting, EFP staff will prepare an ER, which will consider issues related to the CN, such as size, type, timing, and general environmental impacts of the Project. After completion of the ER, the Commission will hold a public hearing on the CN application, presided over by an Administrative Law Judge from

the Office of Administrative Hearings. Under Minnesota law, the CN proceeding is the only time at which the “no-build” alternative and the size, type, and timing of a new electrical generating facility can be considered. These items will not be addressed in the Site Permit process.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 216E.05, the Applicant intends to apply to Mower County for a route permit for the two 138 kV lines, but has not done so as of this date. The 345 kV line does not require a route permit because it is less than 1500 feet in length. The Applicant will seek the necessary permits for its proposed transmission line and substations at the county level.

The EFP staff is also soliciting comments on issues that should be included in the Draft Site Permit for the Project. Such issues include unique characteristics of the proposed site or project that should be considered and items that may be missing or mischaracterized in the Site Permit Application. Based on comments received, EFP staff will prepare and submit a Draft Site Permit to the Commission for consideration. If the Commission issues a Draft Site Permit for public review and comment, then a public meeting will be held in the project area and members of the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and present comments. Persons on the EFP Mailing List for this project (see below) will receive notice of all public and Commission meetings.

Public Comment Period

The EFP staff will accept written comments on issues that should be considered in developing the Draft Site Permit and suggested alternatives to be evaluated in the ER until **March 15, 2010**. Comments should be mailed, emailed, or faxed to Ingrid Bjorklund (see contact information below).

Project Contacts and Information

The Site Permit application and other documents relevant to the proposed project are available on the Commission’s website: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=25724>, and on the Department of Commerce’s eDocket website: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the docket number 09-1197 for the Site Permit documents or 09-937 for the CN documents).

Copies of the applications are also available for review at the: Auditor's Offices in Dodge, Mower, and Olmsted counties; City Offices in Sargeant, Hayfield, Waltham, Brownsdale, and Dexter; Township Clerks of Hayfield, Vernon, Waltham, Sargeant, Pleasant Valley, Red Rock, Dexter, and Rock Dell; and the Grand Meadow Library in Mower County and the Dodge Center Public Library in Dodge County.

Questions about the Project and the Public Utilities Commission’s permitting process may be directed to:

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Persons interested in adding their names to the EFP Project Mailing List for this project should contact the project manager, public advisor, or register online at:
<http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=25724>

Questions about the Pleasant Valley Wind, LLC, LWECS Site Permit Application can also be directed to the applicants by contacting the RES America's Permitting Director, Joseph Grennan, at 303-439-4281, joe.grennan@res-americas.com.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio tape) by calling 651- 201-2202 (Voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (TTY relay service).