County of Faribault

BLUE EARTH, MINNESOTA 56013-0130

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State of Minnesota to foster Community-Based Energy Development (C-BED) projects; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota Statues § 216B.1612, subd. 2(f)(3) requires a resolution of support by the local county Board of Commissioners in each county in which a project is to be located; and

WHEREAS, Big Blue Windfarm LLC ("Developer") has requested a resolution of support for a proposed wind energy project in Jo Daviess Township, Faribault County, Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, the Developer is a Minnesota limited liability company organized by Minnesota residents; and

WHEREAS, the project calls for the development of up to 36 megawatts of wind energy to be produced by up to eighteen turbines; and

WHEREAS, the project is structured to ensure that a majority of the financial benefit of the projects accrue the local owner of each project.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Faribault County Board of Commissioners hereby indicates its support for the development of the Big Blue Windfarm LLC project as a C-BED project in Jo Daviess Township, Faribault County, Minnesota and nothing in this resolution shall be construed to waive or amend any necessary federal, state or local permits or approvals required prior to construction of said projects.

Adopted this 16th day of May 2006.

William Groskreutz, Jr., Chairman

John Thompson, Auditor/Coordinator

Faribault County
Economic Development Authority

Mr. Dan Moore, Project Manager
Windfinity, Inc.
845 310th Ave.
Blue Earth, Mn 56013

Dear Dan:

The Faribault County EDA, at their last meeting, discussed the positive economic impact the development Windfinity, Inc. could have in western Faribault County.

It was felt by the Board members that given this potential economic impact support of your project was more than justified.

Consequently, the Board voted unanimously to support your project upon a motion by Board member Hansen and second by Warmka.

Please feel free to contact me when the need arises for specificities of support in the various grant applications you will be attempting.

Thank you,

Jack Quinlivan
Executive Director

Faribault County Economic Development Authority

125 N. Main • PO Box 415 • Blue Earth, MN 56013 • 507.526.2130 • 507.526.5154 fax • quinliva@bevcomm.net

May 31, 2006

John Thompson
Faribault County Coordinator
PO Box 130
Blue Earth MN 56013

RE: Project Area Environmental Scan

Dear Mr. Thompson:

Big Blue Windfarm, LLC is investigating certain tracts in Faribault County as potential locations of a wind-powered energy facility. While the project is still in the planning and development stage, it is estimated that the facility will consist of approximately 24, 1.5 MW turbines, and a new collector substation and transmission line.

We are consulting the Faribault County Coordinator office for assistance in identifying environmental properties, concerns or issues within the boundaries of the tracts listed that would influence a decision regarding the use of the land for wind electric generation or transmission. We are specifically interested in such information as setbacks to roads, residents, and any other special or sensitive environmental conditions that exist in or near the study area.

While many details, including the exact location of wind turbines and precise route of the transmission line, have yet to be determined, the area shown in the attached figure is the primary focus of our investigation. The project area includes portions of the following tracts:

Township Range Sections
T-102N R-28W 16, 17, 26-31

This information will be used as an initial step to help guide project development in a manner that identifies and avoids impacts to sensitive resources where practicable. We have sent similar query letters to other agencies including the Faribault County Planning and Zoning, US Fish and Wildlife Service, MN DNR and US Army Corp of Engineers. We will also conduct a site survey of areas proximal to proposed facilities in order to preliminarily determine the presence of wetlands.

If you are able, we would appreciate a preliminary scan of parcels in your district by June 14th, 2006. Please contact me at 507-464-3324 if you have any questions.
Thank you for your assistance.

Kind regards,

Daniel R. Moore
Project Manager

James T. Carkulis

From: <Laurie_Fairchild@fws.gov>
To: <dlmoore@bevcomm.net>
Cc: <Mark_Vaniman@fws.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 09, 2006 9:07 AM
Subject: Big Blue windfarm

Daniel,

I've taken a look at the map and project description. There are no known federally listed threatened or endangered species within your project boundary. As Mark told you previously, there are no Service lands or easements within the action area; however, the Pilot Grove Waterfowl Production Area is located approximately 1.5 miles south of the project boundary. It appears the best way to minimize adverse impacts to migratory birds and bats from the turbines is to leave as much buffer as possible between the outermost turbines and Badger Creek, which feeds into the Blue Earth River at the east of the project boundary.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide preliminary comments on the proposed project. If you need a copy of the Service's guidelines regarding siting and lighting considerations for windpower projects/individual turbines, please let me know. We would appreciate an update on the project once your design and turbine locations/# of turbines proposed is more fully developed.

Sincerely,

Laurie Fairchild
F&W Biologist
Twin Cities Ecological Services Field Office
Bloomington 55425
612-725-3548 x214

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, Box 25
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-40__
Phone: (651) 259-5107 Fax: (651) 296-1811 E-mail: sarah.hoffmann@dnr.state.mn.us

June 14, 2006

Mr. Dan Moore
Big Blue Windfarm, LLC
845 310th Avenue
Blue Earth, MN 56013

Re: Request for Natural Heritage information for vicinity of proposed Big Blue Windfarm,
T102N R28W Sections 16 & 17 & 20-22 & 26-31, Faribault County
NHNRP Contact #: ERDB 20060939

Dear Mr. Moore,

The Minnesota Natural Heritage database has been reviewed to determine if any rare plant or animal species or other significant natural features are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the area indicated on the map enclosed with your information request. Based on this review, there are no known occurrences of rare species or native plant communities in the area searched.

The Natural Heritage database is maintained by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program, a unit within the Division of Ecological Services, Department of Natural Resources. It is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, native plant communities, and other natural features. Its purpose is to foster better understanding and protection of these features.

Because our information is not based on a comprehensive inventory, there may be rare or otherwise significant natural features in the state that are not represented in the database. A county-by-county survey of rare natural features is now underway, but has not been completed for Faribault County. Therefore ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist on the project area.

Please be aware that review by the Natural Heritage and Nongame Research Program focuses only on *rare natural features*. It does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. If you require further information on the environmental review process for other natural resource-related issues, you may contact your Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Todd Kolander, at (507) 359-6073.

An invoice in the amount of $75.42 will be mailed to you under separate cover within several weeks of the date of this letter. You are being billed for map and database search and staff scientist review. Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources.

Sincerely,

Lisa Joyal

FOR Sarah D. Hoffmann
Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

June 23, 2006

Mr. Dan Moore
Big Blue Windfarm
845 310th Avenue
Blue Earth, MN 56013

RE: Big Blue Windfarm, construction of 24 wind turbines
T102 R28 S16, S17, S20-22 & S26-31, Jo Daviess Twp., Faribault County
SHPO Number: 2006-2158

Dear Mr. Moore:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the above project. It has been reviewed pursuant to the responsibilities given the Minnesota Historical Society by the Minnesota Historic Sites Act and the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act.

We believe that there is a good probability that unreported archaeological properties might be present in the project area. Therefore, we recommend that a survey of the area be completed. The survey must meet the requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation, and should include an evaluation of National Register eligibility for any properties that are identified. For your information, we have enclosed a list of consultants who have expressed an interest in undertaking such surveys.

If the project area can be documented as previously disturbed or previously surveyed, we will re-evaluate the need for survey. Previously disturbed areas are those where the naturally occurring post-glacial soils and sediments have been recently removed. Any previous survey work must meet contemporary standards.

Please note that this comment letter does not address the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and 36CFR800, procedures of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for the protection of historic properties. If this project is considered for federal assistance, or requires a federal license or permit, it should be submitted to our office with reference to the appropriate federal agency.

If you have any questions on our review of this project, please contact me at (651) 296-5462.

Sincerely,

Kelly Gragg-Johnson

Dennis A. Gimmestad
Government Programs and Compliance Officer

Enclosure: List of Consultants

BOLTON & MENK, INC.
Consulting Engineers & Surveyors
1960 Premier Drive • Mankato, MN 56001-5900
Phone (507) 625-4171 • Fax (507) 625-4177
www.bolton-menk.com

November 20, 2009

Lisa Joyal
Endangered Species Environmental Review Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Natural Heritage and Non-Game Research Program
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 259-5109
fax 651-296-1811
lisa.joyal@state.mn.us

RE: Natural Heritage Information Request
PUC Site Application for Big Blue Wind Farm
Faribault County
BMI Project Number – M32.101673

Dear Ms. Joyal:

Enclosed is your Data Request Form. Big Blue Wind Farm, LLC is in the process of performing an environmental review for the Public Utilities Commission in order that it may assess the environmental impacts of the construction of a large wind energy conversion system (LWECS). The Project site is located in Faribault County approximately 6 miles west of the town of Blue Earth, Minnesota. The Big Blue Wind Farm will be built a total installed capacity of 36 MW, to be constructed in 2010. The Project will consist of 18 wind turbines, transformers, meteorological towers, access roads, underground and overhead electrical lines, a substation and switchyard. The site boundary encompasses an area of approximately 6,400 acres. However, the land occupied by the wind farm would be less than 1% of this area. It is anticipated that the area of direct land use for the turbines and associated facilities would be approximately 32 acres and this would include approximately 11 miles of 30 foot wide gravel access roads.

All properties are contiguous and include the following sections:

Township	Range	Section	Portions of
102N	28W	15	E 1/2
102N	28W	19	S 1/2
102N	28W	20	SW 1/4
102N	28W	21	SE 1/4, and S 1/2 of NE 1/4
102N	28W	22	NE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, and S 1/2 of NW 1/4
102N	28W	26	N 1/2, and W 1/2 of SW 1/4
102N	28W	27	Entire
102N	28W	28	N 1/2
102N	28W	29	N 1/2
102N	28W	30	Entire
102N	28W	31	NW 1/4, and W 1/2 of NE 1/4

DESIGNING FOR A BETTER TOMORROW
Bolton & Menk is an equal opportunity employer.

Please perform a search of your records to determine the presence ecologically sensitive resources in the vicinity of the project limits.

The request form and GIS shapefile were emailed to you on November 20, 2009.

Thank you for your assistance, I am looking forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, please contact me at (507) 625-4171.

Sincerely,

BOLTON & MENK, INC.

Chantill A Kahler Royer

Chantill A. Kahler Royer, P.E.

Cc: Holli High Woodings, Exergy Development
Peter Blethen, P.S., Bolton & Menk, Inc.

Encl.

NO STAPLES
PLEASE

For Agency Use Only:		#Sec _____	Contact Rqsted? _____
Received _____ Due _____	RUSH Inv _____	#EOs _____	Survey Rqsted? _____
Search Radius _____mi.	ER / All Map'd _____	#Com _____	
NoR / NoF / NoE / Std / Sub	Let _____ Log out _____	Related ERDB# _____	

NATURAL HERITAGE INFORMATION SYSTEM (NHIS) DATA REQUEST FORM

Please read the instructions on page 3 before filling out the form. Thank you!

WHO IS REQUESTING THE INFORMATION?

Name and Title: Chantill A. Kahler Royer, Project Engineer

Agency/Company: Bolton & Menk, Inc.

Mailing Address: 1960 Premier Drive (Street) | Mankato (City) | MN (State) | 56001 (Zip Code)

Phone: 507-625-4171 ext. 2636 e-mail: chantillka@bolton-menk.com

Responses will be sent via email. If you prefer US Mail check here: ☐

THIS INFORMATION IS BEING REQUESTED FOR A:

☐ Federal EA ☐ State EAW ☑ PUC Site Application ☐ Watershed Plan
☐ Federal EIS ☐ State EIS ☐ Local Government Permit ☐ Research Project
☐ NEPA Checklist ☐ AUAR
☐ Other (describe) _____

INFORMATION WE NEED FROM YOU:

1) **Enclose a map** of the project boundary/area of interest (topographic maps or aerial photos are preferred).
2) Please **provide a GIS shapefile*** (NAD 83, UTM Zone 15N) of the project boundary/area of interest.
3) List the following locational information* (attach additional sheets if necessary):

For Agency Use: Region / MCBS Status

For Agency Use: TRS Confirmed ☐

County	Township #	Range #	Section(s) (please list **all** sections)
Faribault	T102N	R28W	E 1/2 of Sec. 15; S 1/2 of Sec. 19; SW 1/4 of Sec. 20; SE 1/4, and S 1/2 of NE 1/4 of Sec. 21;
			NE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, and S 1/2 of NW 1/4 of Sec. 22;
			N 1/2, and W 1/2 of SW 1/4 of Sec. 26; Entire Sec. 27; N 1/2 of Sec. 28;
			N 1/2 of Sec. 29; Entire Sec. 30; NW 1/4, and W 1/2 of NE 1/4 of Sec. 31.

4) Please provide the following information (attach additional sheets if necessary):

Project Name: Big Blue Wind Farm

Project Proposer: Big Blue Wind Farm, LLC

Description of Project (including types of disturbance anticipated from the project):

Big Blue Wind Farm, LLC is applying for a Site Permit to construct a large wind energy conversion system (LWECS), the Big Blue Wind Farm. The Project site is located in Faribault County approximately 6 miles west of the town of Blue Earth, Minnesota. The Big Blue Wind Farm will be built a total installed capacity of 36 MW, to be constructed in 2010. The Project will consist of 18 wind turbines, transformers, meteorological towers, access roads, underground and overhead electrical lines, a substation and switchyard. The site boundary encompasses an area of approximately 6,400 acres. However, the land occupied by the wind farm would be less than 1% of this area. It is anticipated that the area of direct land use for the turbines and associated facilities would be approximately 32 acres and this would include approximately 11 miles of 30 foot wide gravel access roads.

Describe the existing land use of the project site. What types of land cover/habitat will be impacted by the proposed project?

Currently, the land use is agricultural row crops, scattered rural residences, and animal confinement buildings.

List any waterbodies (e.g., rivers, intermittent streams, lakes, wetlands) that may be affected by the proposed project, and how they may be impacted (e.g., dewatering, discharge, riverbed disturbance).

The predominant surface waters in the vicinity of the site are portions of Little Badger Creek and Judicial Ditch # 12. The Little Badger Creek joins the Blue Earth River. On-site or off-site flooding would not likely result from the construction and grading of roads and other facilities related to the Project. Implementation of environmental protection measures such as installation of adequately-sized and appropriately placed culverts, and avoidance of channels and other areas of concentrated flow, would ensure that such on-site or off-site flooding does not occur. The wind turbines will be built on uplands, and this will avoid streams located in topographically lower positions in the landscape. Wetlands on site will be delineated in the Spring of 2010.

To your knowledge, has the project undergone a previous Natural Heritage review? If so, please list the correspondence #: ERDB # _____. How does this request differ from the previous request (e.g., change in scope, change in boundary, project being revived, project expansion, different phase)?

Unknown

To your knowledge, have any native plant community or rare species surveys been conducted within the site? If so, please list: Unknown

List any DNR Permits or Licenses that you will be applying for or have already applied for as part of this project:

Public Water Work Permit, Utility Crossing License

INFORMATION WE PROVIDE TO YOU:

1) The response will include a Natural Heritage letter. If applicable, the letter will discuss potential impacts to rare features.

☐ Check here if this information is being requested for a formal environmental review document (e.g., EAW, EIS) **and** your company/agency has a staff ecologist who will be making the impact determination **and** you do not want DNR staff to provide any interpretation of impacts.

2) The response will also include an Index Report of known aggregation sites and known occurrences of federally and state-listed plants and animals*within an approximate one-mile radius of the project boundary/area of interest.

☑ Check here if you would also like geologic features and rare species with no legal status included in the report.

3) If desired, a Detailed Report that contains more information on each occurrence can be obtained. Please note that the Detailed Report may contain specific location information that is protected under *Minnesota Statutes*, section 84.0872, subd. 2, and, as such, the Detailed Report may not be included in any public document (e.g., an EAW). The Index Report and Natural Heritage letter can be included in any public environmental review document.

☑ Check here if you would also like to receive a Detailed Report.

FEES / TURNAROUND TIME

There is a fee* for this service. Requests generally take **3-4 weeks** from date of receipt to process, and are processed in the order received. Rush requests* are processed in 2 weeks or less if workloads allow, but are not guaranteed.

☑ Check here to RUSH this request. You will be charged an additional $50.

I have read the entire form, and the information supplied above is complete and accurate. I understand that material supplied to me from the Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System is copyrighted and that I am not permitted to reproduce or publish any of this copyrighted material without prior written permission from the Minnesota DNR. Further, if permission to publish is given, I understand that I must credit the Minnesota Division of Ecological Resources, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, as the source of the material.

Signature (**required**) Chantell A Kahler Royer

Note: Digital signatures representing the name of a person shall be sufficient to show that such person has signed this document.

Mail or email completed form to:

Lisa Joyal, Natural Heritage Review Coordinator
Division of Ecological Resources
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
lisa.joyal@state.mn.us

Form is available at
http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nhnrp/nhis_data_request.pdf

Revised July 2009

* Please see the instructions on page 3.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Division of Ecological Resources, Box 25

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-4025

Phone: (651) 259-5109 E-mail: lisa.joyal@state.mn.us

January 29, 2010 **Correspondence # ERDB 20060939-0002**

Ms. Chantill Kahler Royer
Bolton & Menk, Inc.
1960 Premier Drive
Mankato, MN 56001

RE: Natural Heritage information in the vicinity of the proposed Big Blue Wind Farm;
T102N R28W Sections 15, 19-22, 26-31; Faribault County

Dear Ms. Kahler Royer,

As requested, the Minnesota Natural Heritage Information System has been queried to determine if any rare species or other significant natural features are known to occur within an approximate one-mile radius of the proposed project. Based on this query, there are no known occurrences of rare species within the search area. Please note, however, that the Minnesota County Biological Survey (MCBS) has identified native prairie remnants outside of the project boundary in the railroad right-of-way in T102N R28W Sections 7 & 8 (GIS shapefiles of MCBS Railroad Rights-of-way Prairies can be downloaded from the DNR's Data Deli website at http://deli.dnr.state.mn.us/). Given that more than 99% of the prairie that was present in the state before settlement has been destroyed, and more than one-third of Minnesota's endangered, threatened, and special concern species are now dependent on the remaining small fragments of Minnesota's prairie ecosystem, we feel that all prairie remnants merit protection. As such, the prairies should be considered an avoidance area for any transmission lines or other utilities associated with the wind farm.

The Natural Heritage Information System (NHIS), a collection of databases that contains information about Minnesota's rare natural features, is maintained by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Ecological Resources. The NHIS is continually updated as new information becomes available, and is the most complete source of data on Minnesota's rare or otherwise significant species, native plant communities, and other natural features. However, the NHIS is not an exhaustive inventory and thus does not represent all of the occurrences of rare features within the state. Therefore, ecologically significant features for which we have no records may exist within the project area.

This letter does not constitute review or approval by the Department of Natural Resources as a whole. Instead, it identifies issues regarding known occurrences of rare features and potential effects to these rare features. Additional rare features for which we have no data may be present in the project area, or there may be other natural resource concerns associated with the proposed project. For these concerns, please contact your DNR Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, Kevin Mixon, at (507) 359-6073. Please be aware that additional site assessments or review may be required.

Thank you for consulting us on this matter, and for your interest in preserving Minnesota's rare natural resources. An invoice will be mailed to you under separate cover.

Sincerely,

Lisa Joyal

Lisa Joyal
Natural Heritage Review Coordinator

GRE 69 kV
Sub
Alliant 161 kV