



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Public Utilities Commission
& Department of Commerce



Issued: September 12, 2011

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT SITE PERMIT
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**In the matters of Prairie Wind Energy, LLC Applications
for a Certificate of Need and a Large Wind Energy Conversion System Site Permit
for the 100 MW Prairie Wind Energy Project in Otter Tail County**

**Certificate of Need Application, PUC Docket Number: IP-6844/CN-10-429
Site Permit Application, PUC Docket Number: IP-6844/WS-10-438**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a public hearing will be held on behalf of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) on the application of Prairie Wind Energy, LLC (Applicant), for a Certificate of Need, in conjunction with a public meeting on the draft for a Site Permit for the proposed 100 MW Prairie Wind Energy Project (Project). The hearing and public meeting will address respectively: (1) whether the proposed Project is needed and in the public interest and (2) issues related to the proposed siting of the Project. The hearing will be held at the time and location listed below. Ending times reflect the latest a public hearing will run. The hearing may conclude earlier if all attendees have had the opportunity to comment and all other business has been concluded

HEARING DATE & LOCATION

October 4, 2011	The Prairie Event Center 201 West Main Street Parkers Prairie, MN	7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
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Administrative Law Judge. Administrative Law Judge Manuel J. Cervantes from the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings will preside at the hearing. Any person who would like to comment on the need for the Project or the proposed siting can do so at the hearing or in writing to Judge Cervantes: Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 64620, St. Paul, MN 55164-0620; (fax) 651-361-7936; e-mail: Manuel.Cervantes@state.mn.us.

Written Comments. Written comments on the Certificate of Need or the Draft Permit should be submitted to Judge Cervantes at the address listed above. Comments will be accepted through October 19, 2011. Mailed comments must be postmarked by this date. Faxed and delivered comments must be received by 4:30 p.m. on this date.

Purpose and Conduct of the Hearing. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive input about the Project. During the public hearing, members of the public may offer either oral or written testimony, offer exhibits for inclusion in the public hearing record and ask questions of the applicant and agency representatives. Any person who wishes to ask questions, but does not want to ask the questions personally, may submit them in writing to the ALJ who will then ask the question during the hearing.

Interested persons may comment on the Certificate of Need and Site Permit Applications, Environmental Report, Draft Site Permit or on the Project generally. The hearing will continue until all persons have had the opportunity to offer testimony and ask questions. If needed, the hearing may be recessed and continued by the ALJ. At the close of the written comment period Judge Cervantes will prepare a written summary of the comments received at the hearing and file it with the Commission, which will consider them in its deliberations of the certificate of need and site permit applications.

Request for Accommodation. Any person who needs an accommodation for a disability in order to participate in the hearing, and any person who requires an interpreter, including a foreign language interpreter, should promptly notify the Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 64620, 600 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0620, Phone: (651) 361-7900 (voice) or (651) 361-7878 (TDD).

Environmental Report. The Department of Commerce, Energy Facility Permitting has completed and issued an Environmental Report on September 6, 2011, for the proposed Prairie Wind Energy Project. The Environmental Report addresses potential human and environmental impacts of the proposed project and alternatives. For a copy of the Environmental Report, please see project contacts and information below.

Draft Site Permit. On August 25 2011, the Commission issued an Order approving a draft site permit for distribution and public comment. For a copy of the draft site permit, please see project contacts and information below. An updated preliminary turbine location map is attached to this notice.

Project Description. The Project is in southeastern Otter Tail County, approximately one mile from the community of Parkers Prairie. Most of the Project is located west of State Highway (SH) 29 and north of SH 235 in the townships of Parkers Prairie and Elmo. Other townships within the Project footprint include Effington and Folden. PWE currently has approximately 8,000 acres under lease for the Project, and the total Project area is 23,921 acres.

PWE currently anticipates that the Project would consist of 41 2.4 MW Nordex N117 turbines yielding a total nameplate capacity of 98.4 MW. The Applicant however is requesting authority for a total nameplate capacity of 100 MW, allowing the final number and size of the turbines to be dictated by the terms of a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) between PWE and an off-taker, current market conditions, turbine availability and the terms of the final Site Permit for the Project. The hub height of the turbines is expected to be 91 meters, and rotor diameters of 117 meters.

The Project would include: gravel access roads; underground conductors installed between turbines; 34.5 kV underground or, if necessary, overhead feeders to collect power from underground conductors installed between turbine strings; installation of a Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition (SCADA) system; construction of a substation adjacent to an existing Great River Energy 115kV transmission line located in Section 10 of Parkers Prairie Township; construction of an Operation and Maintenance facility; and one or two additional meteorological towers (two are currently located in the project area).

As proposed, the Project is expected to achieve commercial operation by December 31, 2012.

Eminent Domain. 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.

Authority and Statement of Issues to be Decided. In order to proceed with this Project, the Applicant must obtain a certificate of need and a site permit from the Commission. The Commission is authorized by Minnesota Statutes section 216B.243, to issue a certificate of need for a large wind energy facility if the applicant can demonstrate that there is a need for the Project. A certificate of need is a state permit that is issued upon a determination that construction of an energy facility is in the public interest. The Commission is required by Minnesota Statutes section 216B.243, subdivision 4, to hold a hearing on the application for a certificate of need.

The Commission is authorized by Minnesota Statutes section 216F.04 to issue LWECS site permits for certain wind energy facilities. When the Commission designates a site, it issues a site permit for the construction of a facility specifying the design, location, preparation, and operation of the facility, along with any other appropriate conditions it deems necessary. The Commission is required by Minnesota Statutes section 216F.05 and Minnesota Rule 7854.0900 to hold a public meeting on an application for a site permit for an LWECS.

Contested Case Hearing Request. Any person may request a more formal contested case hearing on the site permit proceeding for the LWECS pursuant to Minnesota Rule 7854.0900. All contested case hearing requests must be filed with Judge Cervantes in writing by 4:30 p.m. on October 19, 2011. The person requesting the contested case hearing must list the issues sought to be addressed in the hearing and the reason that a contested case hearing is required to resolve those issues. The Commission shall order a contested case hearing if it finds that a material issue of fact has been raised and that the holding of the contested case hearing will aid it in making a final decision on whether or not to authorize construction of the Project.

Project Contacts and Information. For more information on the **Certificate of Need**, please contact:

Michael Kaluzniak
Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
121 7th Place E., Suite 350, St. Paul, MN 55101-2147
(651) 201-2257
mike.kaluzniak@state.mn.us

For additional information regarding the **Site Permit** application, or to place your name on the project mailing list maintained for this project, please contact:

David Birkholz, State Permit Manager
Minnesota Office of Energy Security
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone: (651) 296-2878
Fax: (651) 297-7891
david.birkholz@state.mn.us

Jamie MacAlister, Public Advisor
Minnesota Office of Energy Security
85 7th Place East, Suite 500
St. Paul, MN 55101
Phone: (651) 296-1335
Fax: (651) 297-7891
jamie.macalister@state.mn.us

The certificate of need application and environmental report can be found on the eDockets website: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the year "10" and the number "429"). The LWECS site permit application and draft site permit can be found on the eDockets website (enter the year "10" and the number "438").

The permit applications, draft site permit, environmental report, and other relevant documents, including Minnesota's statutes and rules governing the site permitting process, are also available on the Commission's energy facility permitting website at:

<http://www.energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=30591>.

You can also place your name on the Project mailing list at this website.

Copies of the applications are also available for review at the: County Courthouse of Otter Tail County; City offices in Parkers Prairie; and Township Clerks of Parkers Prairie, Elmo, Effington and Folden.

Questions regarding the Prairie Wind Energy Project and its permit application can also be directed to the applicant by contacting:

Terry Carlson
Prairie Wind Energy
PO Box 33
Parkers Prairie, MN 56361
Phone: (218) 338-4875
Email: tcarlson@pwemn.net

This document can be made available in alternative formats (i.e., large print or audio) by calling 651.296.0406 (voice). Persons with hearing or speech disabilities may call us through Minnesota Relay at 1.800.627.3529 or by dialing 711.

