



**In the Matter of the Application of  
Stoneray Power Partners, LLC for a  
Certificate of Need for a 105 MW Wind  
Project in Pipestone and Murray Counties  
PUC Docket No. IP-6646/CN-13-193**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT SCOPING DECISION**

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The above matter has come before the Department of Commerce for a decision on the content of the Environmental Report (ER) to be prepared in consideration of the Stoneray Power Partners, LLC Application for a Certificate of Need for the proposed 105 Megawatt (MW) Stoneray Wind Farm (Project) in Pipestone and Murray counties. Stoneray Power Partners, LLC is a wholly-owned subsidiary of EDF Renewable Energy (formerly enXco).

A final decision on turbine selection and design has not been made, but the Project will consist of turbines with a rated capacity between 1.7 and 3.2 MW in such number and combination as to yield up to 105 MW. Facilities associated with the project include a project substation, collector and feeder lines, access roads, meteorological towers and an operations and maintenance building.

The Project is located around the community of Woodstock, with most of the project site in Rock and Burke townships in Pipestone County and with portions of the project in Chanarambie and Cameron townships in Murray County. There are currently 29,500 acres within the project boundary, with approximately 14,500 acres under site control. Chanarambie Power Partners, LLC, another EDF Renewable Energy subsidiary, holds easements on approximately 3,500 additional acres of private land with the Project area. Electricity from the Project would be delivered into the Chanarambie Substation and distributed into the grid using the existing 115 kV transmission lines.

The project requires a Certificate of Need (CN) and a Site Permit for the wind farm from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission). The CN (CN-13-193) and the site permit (WS-13-216) are being considered by the Commission in separate dockets.

On April 29, 2013, Stoneray Power Partners, LLC filed a Certificate of Need Application with the Commission for the Stoneray Wind Farm. On July 24, 2013, the Commission issued an order accepting the Application as substantially complete and authorizing an informal review process. The Proposed Project is a large energy facility under Minnesota Statute 216B.2421. As such, it requires the Minnesota Department of Commerce to prepare an Environmental Report for the project pursuant to Minnesota Rule 7849.1200.

A public meeting was held on August 14, 2013, in Lake Wilson to receive comments on the scope of the environmental report. Approximately 45 persons attended the meeting. A public comment period followed the meeting; the comment period closed on August 30, 2013. Four residents commented during the Public Meeting. Two written comments were received during the comment period.

The Comments at the meeting included questions on where turbines would be located (which landowners would be selected for siting); would transmission build be required (in this case a connection to the grid already exists with Chanarambie Substation); where does the power from the project go (a final off-take agreement is not yet in place); and are there government subsidies for the producer (in this case, the developer intends to time the Project to take advantage of the expiring Production Tax Credit).

Two state agencies submitted written comments. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency submitted a reminder that a Construction Stormwater Permit is required for the Project, and that a new permit became official on August 1, 2013, with more stringent requirements for permanent stormwater treatment. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) submitted notes on the Casey Jones State Trail, biodiversity sites, updating threatened and endangered species lists, bat monitoring and Blanding's turtles. DNR noted its concurrence that the Project as planned is a low risk site for bird and bat fatality. DNR submitted additional comments on the Draft Site Permit.

No member of the public or any state agency recommended system or project alternatives to be considered in the Environmental Report.

The proposed project is intended to produce renewable energy in furtherance of Minnesota's renewable energy objectives. Accordingly, alternatives examined in the ER will be limited to "eligible energy technologies" that support these objectives (Minnesota Statute 216B.1691). These alternatives will include: (1) a generic 100 MW wind generation project sited elsewhere in Minnesota, (2) a 38.5 MW biomass plant, and (3) a "no-build" option. An ER provides a high level environmental analysis of the proposed Project and system alternatives, and reviews environmental impacts associated with named and alternative projects. It is a part of a larger Public Utilities Commission investigation of the Certificate of Need Application. The Commission in its overall review will address all the issues and alternatives required by rule.

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Having reviewed the matter and consulted with the Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis staff, and in accordance with Minnesota Rules 7849.1400 and 7849.1500, I hereby make the following scoping decision:

## MATTERS TO BE ADDRESSED

### **Stoneray Wind Farm**

#### **1.0 Project Description [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 1, A]**

#### **2.0 Alternatives to be Evaluated [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 1, B]**

- 2.1 No-build Alternative
- 2.2 A Generic 100 MW Wind Project
- 2.3 A 38.5 MW Biomass Plant
- 2.4 Other Renewable Energy Sources

#### **3.0 Human and Environmental Impacts and Mitigation of Project and Evaluated Alternatives [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 1, C, D,E]**

- 3.1 Emissions [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, A]
- 3.2 Hazardous air pollutants and VOCs [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, B]
- 3.3 Aesthetic Impacts and Visibility impairment [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, C]
- 3.4 Ozone formation [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, D]
- 3.5 Fuel availability and delivery [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, E]
- 3.6 Associated transmission facilities [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, F]
- 3.7 Water appropriations [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, G]
- 3.8 Wastewater [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, H]
- 3.9 Solid and hazardous wastes [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, I]
- 3.10 Noise [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 2, J]
- 3.11 *Property Values*
- 3.12 *Communication Signals*
- 3.13 *Wildlife*
- 3.14 *Natural Environment*
- 3.15 *Agriculture*

#### **4.0 Feasibility and availability of alternatives [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 1, F]**

- 4.1 No-build alternative
- 4.2 100 MW wind project
- 4.3 38.5 MW biomass plant
- 4.4 Stoneray Wind Farm

#### **5.0 Required Permits [Minn. Rule 7849.1500, subp. 1, G]**

## ISSUES OUTSIDE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The Environmental Report will not consider the following matters:

1. Impacts or mitigative measures associated with specific sites, including specific tower or road locations for the proposed project and alternatives.
2. The negotiation and content of easement agreements by which land owners are paid for property rights, including wind rights.
3. Any alternatives not specifically described in this scoping decision.

## SCHEDULE

The Environmental Report will be completed no later than December 2013. A public hearing will be held in the Project Area before an Administrative Law Judge after the Environmental Report has been issued and notice served.

Signed this 6<sup>th</sup> day of September 2013

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
DIVISION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

  
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William Grant, Deputy Commissioner