



STATE OF MINNESOTA
Office of Energy Security



ISSUED: MARCH 18, 2010

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION ACCEPTANCE
AND SCOPING MEETING**

**In the Matter of Paynesville Wind, LLC Applications for a
Large Wind Energy Conversion System Site Permit and a Certificate of Need
for the Paynesville Wind Farm in Stearns County**

PUC Docket Numbers: IP-6830/WS-10-49 and IP-6830/CN-09-1110

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Minnesota Office of Energy Security Energy Facilities Permitting (EFP) staff will hold a public meeting on the Site Permit and Certificate of Need (CN) applications submitted by Paynesville Wind, LLC (Applicant), a wholly owned subsidiary of Geronimo Wind Energy, LLC, to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to build and operate the Paynesville Wind Farm (Project).

**MONDAY, APRIL 19, 2010
7:00 p.m.**

**SPORTSMAN'S DEN
23396 Highway 4
Paynesville, MN 56362**

The purpose of the public meeting is to provide information about the proposed Project and to take public comment and input on the scope of the Environmental Report and issues to be considered in developing a Draft Site Permit for the Project. In addition, 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, and make comments, including suggestions about alternatives to the Project and impacts to address in the Environmental Report. Representatives from Geronimo Wind Energy will be available to answer questions about the Project.

Project Description

Paynesville Wind, LLC, proposes a Large Wind Energy Conversion System (LWECS) of 95 megawatts (MW) using between 42 and 63 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. Each turbine model has a hub height of 80 meters (262 feet). In addition to the wind turbines, the Project would include access roads, a permanent meteorological tower, electrical collection system, one substation, one metering yard adjacent to

an existing substation, one transmission line, and an operations and maintenance building. The electricity from a group of turbines totaling 50 MW will be transported via the collection system, operating at 34.5 kV, to a new substation, which will step up the voltage to 69 kV and be transported on a new 69 kV line of less than one mile in length to the Paynesville substation. The electricity from the remaining turbines will be transported via the collection system and delivered to a new metering yard adjacent to the Paynesville substation where it will connect to the Paynesville substation. The Applicant's goal is to begin commercial operation in the third quarter of 2011.

Proposed Site Location

The Project area (shown in the accompanying map) consists of approximately 15,000 acres located in Stearns County in Zion, Paynesville, Spring Hill, and Lake Henry townships. The project area is located north of Paynesville and southeast of Lake Henry. Approximately 11,500 acres are under the Applicant's control via wind easements. The Applicant believes the site is sufficiently large to provide flexibility in the micro-siting process.

Eminent Domain for Paynesville 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 December 8, 2009, which was accepted as complete by the Commission on February 5, 2010. The Applicant filed its Site Permit application on January 29, 2010, which was accepted as complete by the Commission on March 9, 2010. The applications are available on the Commission's website and from the Applicant's representatives 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 as part of the environmental review for the CN application under Minnesota Rule 7849.1400. After the public meeting, EFP staff will prepare an Environmental Report, which will consider issues related to the CN, such as size, type, timing, and general environmental impacts of the Project. After completion of the Environmental Report, 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 does not need a route permit from the Commission for its proposed transmission line because it is less than 100 kV. 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 and issues to be evaluated in the Environmental Report until **May 10, 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=25836>, and on the Department of Commerce's eDocket website: <https://www.edockets.state.mn.us/EFiling/search.jsp> (enter the docket number 10-49 for the Site Permit documents or 09-1110 for the CN documents).

Copies of the applications are also available for review at the: Auditor's Offices in Stearns County; City Offices in Paynesville and Lake Henry; Township Clerks of Paynesville, Zion, Spring Hill, and Lake Henry; and the Paynesville Public Library in Stearns County.

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

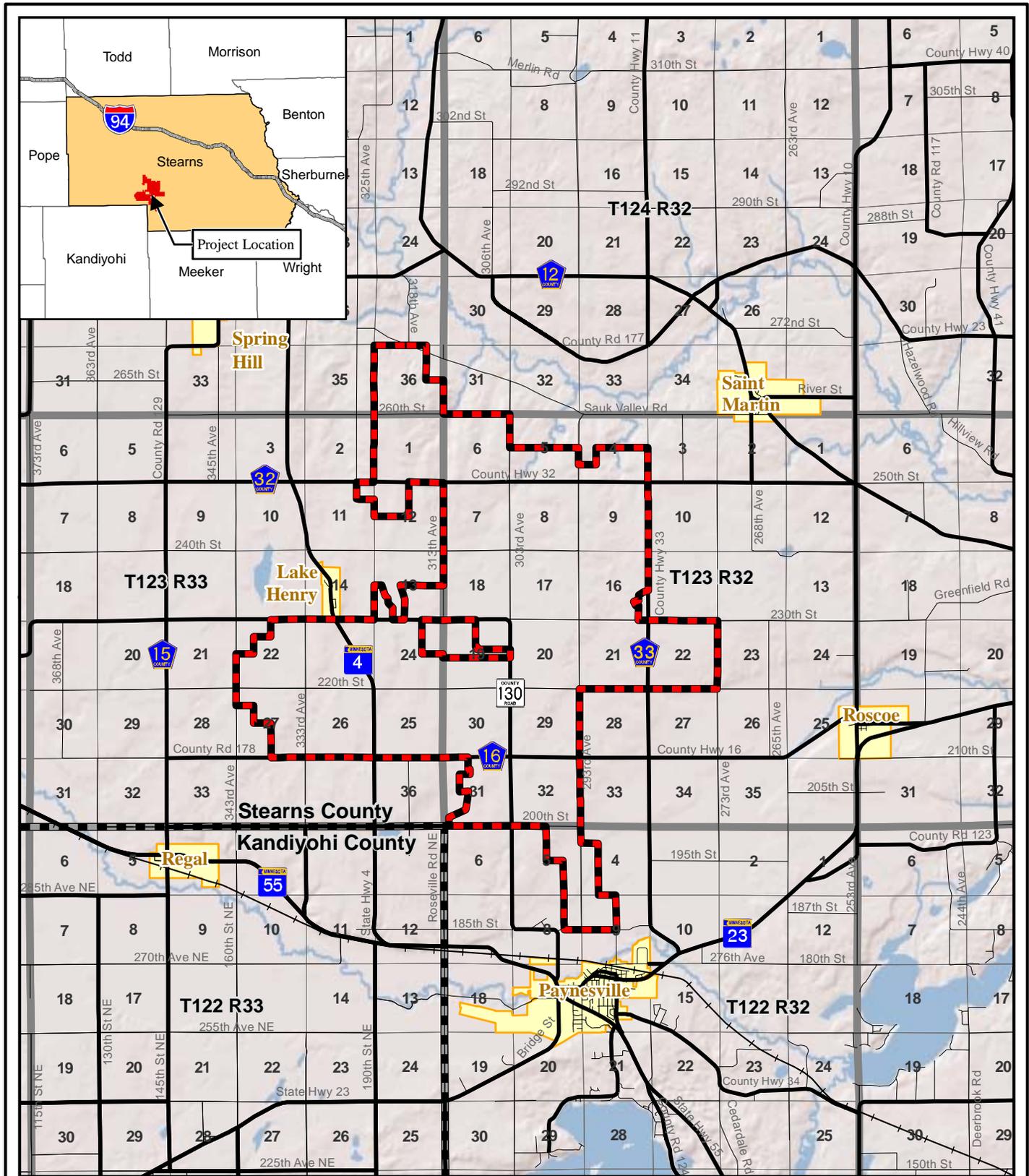
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Persons interested in adding their names to the EFP Project Mailing List for this project should contact the project manager, public advisor, or register online at: <http://energyfacilities.puc.state.mn.us/Docket.html?Id=25836>

Questions about the Paynesville Wind, LLC, LW ECS Site Permit application can also be directed to the Applicant by contacting Justin Pickar by email at justin@geronimowind.com or Patrick Smith at patrick@geronimowind.com or by calling 952-988-9000. The address for Geronimo Wind Energy is 7650 Edinborough Way, Suite 725, Edina, MN 55435.

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).



- Legend
- Project Boundary
 - Cities
 - Townships
 - County Boundary

Figure 1-1. Project Vicinity Map
Paynesville Wind Farm
Geronimo Wind Energy
Stearns County, MN