

Experts completing studies for Jordanville wind project

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JORDANVILLE - Experts studying the proposed Jordanville Wind Energy Project are in the process of finalizing additional environmental, geophysical and operational studies for the State Environmental Quality Review process as project developer Community Energy continues its extensive pre-construction review.

Community Energy, based in Wayne, Pa., released the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement in May. The additional studies are evaluating social and economic factors as well as environmental effects.

One of the issues being looked at, at the request of the Department of Environmental Conservation, is what impact the project will have on the area's karst topography, including the presence of sinkholes and underground limestone caves. Opponents of the project are saying the impact on karst features would put groundwater safety at risk.

"We are studying this issue extensively as asked by the DEC," said Skip Brennan, New York Development Director with Community Energy. "We concur with the DEC that we do not want to put such an expensive turbine in a sinkhole application. We're going to look at the correct places to put these turbines."

A supplement to the DEIS is being prepared with additional studies for release in early November and will be available for further public comment. The studies are being conducted by environmental, cultural and other professionals.

The turbine location map has been revised and calls for a reduction in the number of towers from an originally-proposed 75 down to 68 in the towns of Stark and Warren.

"We have had some landowner issues and we wanted to make sure to protect wetlands at the site," said Brennan.

In addition, the second phase of the cultural resources study is investigating potential impacts to archeological sites and historic properties.

Also:

- A visual impact assessment includes additional representative photo simulations of what the turbines will look like.
- An additional acoustic study is measuring the current levels of sound and incorporates the sound the turbines would add.
- A wetlands delineation report is determining the location of wetlands and potential impacts from construction.
- A hydrogeology study is analyzing the potential to impact groundwater and wells at the site.
- A preliminary decommissioning plan is reviewing the details for removing the project components following the life of the project.

Avian experts have also been contracted to perform a raptor study to survey migrating hawks and eagles at the Jordanville site. This study will be completed at the end of November with the report submitted in the Final Environmental Impact Study.

According to Community Energy, the 136-megawatt Jordanville Wind Farm is expected to generate \$6.3 million in wage and salary compensation paid to local workers during construction, generate around \$800,000 in annual revenues for local governments and school districts, and have the capacity to provide the annual electric needs of more than 51,000 homes.

If the project receives ultimate approval, construction would begin next spring and likely finish up next fall, said Brennan.