

MEPA Analyst *Aisling Eglinton*

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NPC

Notice of Project Change

The information requested on this form must be completed to begin MEPA Review of a NPC in accordance with the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations (see 301 CMR 11.10(1)).

Project Name: Hoosac Wind Project		EOEA #: 13143	
Street: Bakke Ridge, Crum Hill, Tilda Hill Road, Main Road, Kingley Hill Road			
Municipality: Florida and Monroe		Watershed: Connecticut (Deerfield) Hudson (Hoosac)	
Universal Tranverse Mercator Coordinates: 15526361.76393 N. 2175332.95130 S.		Latitude: 42°43'38" Longitude: 73°01 '30"	
Status of project construction: 0 %complete			
Proponent: Iberdrola Renewables			
Street: 1125 NW Couch Street Suite 700			
Municipality: Portland		State: Oregon	Zip Code: 97209
Name of Contact Person From Whom Copies of this NPC May Be Obtained: Nicole Sanford			
Firm/Agency: Stantec Consulting Services		Street: 136 West Street, Suite 203	
Municipality: Northampton		State: MA	Zip Code: 01060
Phone: 413-584-4776		Fax: 413-584-3157	E-mail: nicole.sanford@stantec.com

In 25 words or less, what is the project change?

The Hoosac Wind NPC incorporates changes necessitated since the ENF review by updated installation guidelines issued by the wind turbine manufacturer: the **substitution** of a 4,000 SF maintenance building for the originally proposed 1,000 SF maintenance building, and the inclusion of two permanent meteorological towers, trailer turnarounds, and enlarged rotor assembly areas at each turbine. The NPC also reflects final permits and design plans for the 34.5 kilovolt Distribution Tie-In Line, which were further developed after the ENF review.
See full project change description beginning on page 3.

Date of ENF filing or publication in the Environmental Monitor: **November 26, 2003**

Was an EIR required? ☐ Yes ☒ No; if yes,
was a Draft EIR filed? ☐ Yes (Date:) ☐ No
was a Final EIR filed? ☐ Yes (Date:) ☐ No

was a Single EIR filed? ☐ Yes (Date:) ☐ No

Have other NPCs been filed? ☐ Yes (Date(s):) ☒ No

If this is a NPC solely for lapse of time (see 301 CMR 11.10(2)) proceed directly to
"ATTACHMENTS & SIGNATURES" on page 4.

PERMITS / FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE / LAND TRANSFER

List or describe all new or modified state permits, financial assistance, or land transfers not previously reviewed: **Modification to the NHESP issued Conservation Management Permit and Article 97 approval by the Massachusetts legislature.**

Are you requesting a finding that this project change is insignificant? (see 301 CMR 11.10(6))
☐ Yes ☒ No; if yes, attach justification.

Are you requesting that a Scope in a previously issued Certificate be rescinded?
☐ Yes ☒ No; if yes, attach the Certificate

Are you requesting a change to a Scope in a previously issued Certificate? ☐ Yes ☒ No; if yes, attach Certificate and describe the change you are requesting:

Summary of Project Size & Environmental Impacts	Previously reviewed	Net Change	Currently Proposed
LAND			
Total site acreage	1,520 acres	38 acres	1,558 acres
Acres of land altered	48 acres (38 temporary and 10 permanent)	24 (19.4 temporary and 4.6 permanent)	72 acres (57.4 temporary and 14.6 permanent)
Acres of impervious area	0.11 acres	0.08 acres	0.19 acres
Square feet of bordering vegetated wetlands alteration	3,900 square feet	Reduction of 787 square feet*	3,113 square feet
Square feet of other wetland alteration	375 linear feet of Bank	Reduction of 325 linear feet of Bank* 35,000 square feet of Riverfront Area	50 linear feet of Bank and 35,000 square feet of Riverfront Area
Acres of non-water dependent use of tidelands or waterways	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

STRUCTURES			
Gross square footage -Turbines	Twenty 213 ft tall tubular towers	0	Twenty 213 ft tall tubular towers
- Building	1,336 square feet	4,000 square feet	4,336 square feet
Number of housing units	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Maximum height (in feet) - Wind Turbines	Each tower is 213 feet tall; it is 340 feet from base to tip of rotor in highest position	0	Each tower is 213 feet tall; it is 340 feet from base to tip of rotor in highest position
- Building	20 feet	0	20 feet
TRANSPORTATION			
Vehicle trips per day	6	0	6
Parking spaces	20	0	20
WATER/WASTEWATER			
Gallons/day (GPD) of water use	45	0	45
GPD water withdrawal	45	0	45
GPD wastewater generation ¹ treatment	45	0	45
Length of water/sewer mains (in miles)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

*** The reductions in impacts to wetland and bank are due to the re-delineations and re-classifications of resource areas during the appeal of the Order of conditions issued by the Town of Florida.**

Does the project change involve any new or modified:

1. conversion of public parkland or other Article 97 public natural resources to any purpose not in accordance with Article 97? ☒Yes ☐No
2. release of any conservation restriction, preservation restriction, agricultural preservation restriction, or watershed preservation restriction? ☐Yes ☒No
3. impacts on Estimated Habitat of Rare Species, Vernal Pools, Priority Sites of Rare Species, or Exemplary Natural Communities? ☒Yes ☐No
4. impact on any structure, site or district listed in the State Register of Historic Place or the inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth?
☐Yes ☒No; if yes, does the project involve any demolition or destruction of any listed or inventoried historic or archaeological resources? ☐Yes ☐No
5. impact upon an Area of Critical Environmental Concern? ☐Yes ☒No

If you answered 'Yes' to any of these 5 questions, explain below:

Further development of the plans for the Distribution Tie-In Lines portion of the project has resulted in the need for the clearing of a narrow linear strip of vegetation adjacent to public roadways within the Monroe State Forest, totaling approximately 8,000 SF. The project team has identified a larger combination of mitigation areas along the route where areas that have been previously disturbed by maintenance of the existing MECO distribution line will be enhanced and restored, through the introduction of shrubs **and/or** protection from future maintenance, thereby meeting the "no-net-loss" standard. These mitigation measures were subsequently reviewed for compliance with **EEA's** Article 97 Land Disposition Policy, and they will be incorporated into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The Conservation and Management Permit (No. **005-052.DFW**) for the project anticipated the subsequent submission of more detailed goldenrod (*Solidago **macrophylla***) surveys and final design plans. Botanical surveys performed in 2007, and approved by the NHESP, demonstrate that the number of large-leaved goldenrod plants at the project site is significantly greater than previously understood. Although revised impact assessments indicate that the design modifications will affect additional large-leaved goldenrod plants, it is anticipated that the level of impacts will continue to comply with MESA regulatory standards for insignificant impact to the local population and provide long-term net benefit to the species through the implementation of the NHESP approved Conservation and Management Plan. Final permit reviews, including any updates of the mitigation, will be conducted by NHESP.

PROJECT CHANGE DESCRIPTION (attach additional pages as necessary). The project change description should include:

- (a) a brief description of the project as most recently reviewed
- (b) a description of material changes to the project as previously reviewed,
- (c) the significance of the proposed changes, with specific reference to the factors listed 301 CMR 11.10(6), and
- (d) measures that the project is taking to avoid damage to the environment or to minimize and mitigate unavoidable environmental impacts. If the change will involve modification of any previously issued Section 61 Finding, include a proposed modification of the Section 61 Finding (or it will be required in a Supplemental EIR).

The Hoosac Wind Project is a 30 megawatt (MW) renewable energy generation project located in Florida and Monroe, Massachusetts. At peak capacity, the project will be capable of producing enough emission-free electricity to power approximately 9,500 homes. The project will provide significant environmental benefits to the Commonwealth by displacing approximately 378 tons of **SO₂** (a major component of acid rain), 231 tons of **NO_x** (a major component of smog) and 71,902 tons of **CO₂** (a major greenhouse gas) that would otherwise be produced by fossil fuel based energy each year.

Twenty 1.5 MW commercial scale wind turbines with associated infrastructure, including gravel access roads for year round accessibility to turbines and a 4,000 SF operations and maintenance building, will be located on the Wind Farm Facility site. Eleven wind turbines will be located on the Bakke Mountain ridgeline in Florida and nine turbines will be located on the Crum Hill ridgeline in Florida and Monroe (see Figure 1 Site Locus). The project also includes a 34.5 kV Distribution **Tie-In** Line to connect the Wind Power Facility to the **ISO** New England electrical grid. The Tie-In-Line will extend 6.1 miles along the existing public rights-of-way (ROW) of roads in the Towns of Florida and Monroe, ultimately connecting to a new substation in the village of Monroe Bridge.

An Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the project was submitted to the **MEPA** Office in November 2003 (EOEA Number: 13143). On December 26, 2003 the Secretary of Environmental

Affairs determined that the project did not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). In the time since the ENF was submitted and reviewed, the project has undergone extensive subsequent review and permitting by a wide range of state agencies. Most notably, there have been over five years of administrative and legal appeals by a citizens group challenging the Superseding Order of Conditions issued by the Department of Environmental Protection under the Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) for the Wind Farm Facility in Florida; that permit is currently on appeal to the Supreme Judicial Court. Other major permits obtained by the project include a Conservation Permit issued by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA); a Section 72 order issued by the Department of Public Utilities with respect to the Distribution Tie-in Line; and WPA Orders of Conditions for the Distribution Tie-in Line issued by the Florida and Monroe Conservation Commissions.

During this nearly six-year time period of WPA appeals and other state review processes, wind industry standards have evolved and the final design plans for the project have been refined and finalized. The purpose of this NPC is to present the culmination of final project design review resulting from updated information and agency review of permit applications. Here follows a summary of specific changes since the ENF, resulting in both decreases and increases in environmental impacts, as well as expanded environmental studies and mitigation programs carried out by the proponent. The attached narrative and appendices provides more detail on changes since the ENF with regards to environmental impacts and mitigation programs.

The extensive processes of WPA reviews and appeals have resulted in significantly reduced levels of impacts to wetland resources on a project-wide basis. As described in the NPC, the aggregate amount of bordering vegetated wetland (**BVW**) alterations has been reduced from approximately 3,900 SF to 3,113 SF, and the aggregate amount of inland bank alteration has been reduced from 375 LF to under 50 LF.

The Conservation and Management Permit (No. **005-052.DFW**) for the project anticipated the subsequent submission of more detailed goldenrod (*Solidago **macrophylla***) surveys and final design plans. Botanical surveys performed in 2007, and approved by the NHESP, demonstrate that the number of large-leaved goldenrod plants at the project site is significantly greater than previously understood. Although revised impact assessments indicate that the design modifications will affect additional large-leaved goldenrod plants, it is anticipated that the level of impacts will continue to comply with MESA regulatory standards for insignificant impact to the local population and provide long-term net benefit to the species through the implementation of the NHESP approved Conservation and Management Plan. Final permit reviews, including any updates of the mitigation, will be conducted by NHESP.

Further development of the plans for the Distribution Tie-In-Lines has resulted in the need for the clearing of a narrow linear strip of vegetation adjacent to public roadways within the Monroe State Forest, totaling approximately 8,000 SF. To comply with **EEA's** Article 97 Land Disposition Policy, the proponent has committed to restore and enhance over 12,000 SF of previously disturbed mitigation areas along the route, thereby meeting the "no-net-loss" standard of the policy. The mitigation commitments are fully described in this NPC.

The project will involve a net increase in temporary and permanent land alteration impacts, from 48 acres as described in the ENF to the total required by the final design plans of 72.7 acres, caused by the need to comply with current industry standards. Nearly all of this increase comes in the form of temporary land clearing that will take place during construction; the project-wide area of permanent land alteration impacts described in this NPC totals 14.6 acres, an increase of only 4 acres over the impacts described in the ENF. Land alteration impacts will be fully minimized and mitigated through the reduction of roadway widths due to the use of narrow-track cranes through a process of re-vegetating affected construction areas.

The proponent has cooperated with state agencies to undertake an extensive set of avian and bat studies at the project site, aimed at expanding the state of knowledge regarding potential impacts and risks to wildlife posed by wind facility development in Massachusetts. These studies, the results of which are contained in this NPC, included a daytime **raptor** migration study and three

years of Anabat studies of nighttime bat movements at the site.

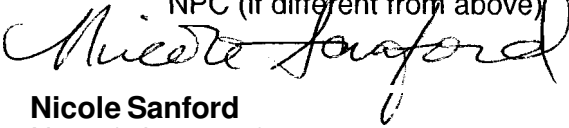
In summary, the project will provide net benefits to environmental quality as a renewable energy facility. The only significant increase in project impacts described in this NPC is in the area of temporary construction-period land alterations, which will be fully mitigated. The only additional state permit or approval will be Article 97 approval for a small area of vegetation clearing along the Distribution Tie-in Line route, which will also be fully mitigated. The project has studied and committed to all reasonably practicable measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts, in accordance with the requirements of the **MEPA** statute and regulations. Any remaining issues can be fully addressed during project permitting. Therefore, no further **MEPA** review should be necessary.

ATTACHMENTS & SIGNATURES

Attachments:

1. Secretary's most recent Certificate on this project
2. Plan showing most recent previously-reviewed proposed build condition
3. Plan showing currently proposed build condition
4. Original U.S.G.S. map or good quality color copy (8-112 x 11 inches or larger) indicating the project location and boundaries
5. List of all agencies and persons to whom the proponent circulated the NPC, in accordance with 301 CMR 11.10(7)

Signatures:

11/12/09			
Date	Signature of Responsible Officer	Date	Signature of person preparing NPC (if different from above)
11/13/09			
Andy Linehan		Nicole Sanford	
Name (print or type)		Name (print or type)	
Iberdrola Renewables		Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.	
Firm/Agency		Firm/Agency	
1125 NW Couch Street		136 West Street, Suite 203	
Street		Street	
Portland, Oregon 97209		Northampton, MA 01060	
Municipality/State/Zip		Municipality/State/Zip	
503-796-6955		413-584-4776	
Phone		Phone	