

**Maine Revised Statute Title 35-A,
Chapter 34: THE MAINE WIND ENERGY ACT**

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35-A §3401. SHORT TITLE

This chapter may be known and cited as "the Maine Wind Energy Act." [2003, c. 665, §3 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

2003, c. 665, §3 (NEW).

35-A §3402. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS

The Legislature finds that it is in the public interest to explore opportunities for and encourage the development, where appropriate, of wind energy production in the State in a manner that is consistent with all state and federal environmental standards and that achieves reliable, cost-effective, sustainable energy production on those sites in the State that will attract investment and permit the development of viable wind energy projects. The Legislature finds that the development of the wind energy potential in the State needs to be integrated into the existing energy supply and transmission systems in a way that achieves system reliability, total capital cost-effectiveness and optimum short-term and long-term benefits to Maine people. The Legislature finds it is in the public interest to encourage the construction and operation of community wind power generation facilities in the State. For the purposes of this chapter, "community wind power generation facility" means an electricity-generating facility at any one site with instantaneous generating nameplate capacity of not more than 10 megawatts that is powered entirely by wind energy. The Legislature also finds it is in the public interest to encourage wind energy research and the development of wind generation equipment manufacturing facilities in the State. [2007, c. 693, §37 (AFF); 2007, c. 693, §4 (AMD).]

1. Contribution of wind energy development. The Legislature finds and declares that the wind energy resources of the State constitute a valuable indigenous and renewable energy resource and that wind energy development, which is unique in its benefits to and impacts on the natural environment, makes a significant contribution to the general welfare of the citizens of the State for the following reasons:

A. Wind energy is an economically feasible, large-scale energy resource that does not rely on fossil fuel combustion or nuclear fission, thereby displacing electrical energy provided by these other sources and avoiding air pollution, waste disposal problems and hazards to human health from emissions, waste and by-products; consequently, wind energy development may address energy needs while making a significant contribution to achievement of the State's renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction objectives, including those in Title 38, section 576; [2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §2 (AMD).]

B. At present and increasingly in the future with anticipated technological advances that promise to increase the number of places in the State where grid-scale wind energy development is economically viable, and changes in the electrical power market that favor clean power sources, wind energy may be used to displace electrical power that is generated from fossil fuel combustion and thus reduce our citizens' dependence on imported oil and natural gas and improve environmental quality and state and regional energy security; and [2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §2 (AMD).]

C. Renewable energy resources within the State and in the Gulf of Maine have the potential, over time, to provide enough energy for the State's homeowners and businesses to reduce their use of oil and liquid petroleum-fueled heating systems by transition to alternative, renewable energy-based heating systems and to reduce their use of petroleum-fueled motor vehicles by transition to electric-powered motor vehicles. Electrification of heating and transportation has potential to increase the State's energy independence, to help stabilize total residential and commercial energy bills and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. [2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §2 (NEW).]

[2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §2 (AMD) .]

2. Need for modification of regulatory process for siting wind energy developments. The Legislature finds that it is in the public interest to reduce the potential for controversy regarding siting of grid-scale wind energy development by expediting development in places where it is most compatible with existing patterns of development and resource values when considered broadly at the landscape level. Accordingly, the Legislature finds that certain aspects of the State's regulatory process for determining the environmental acceptability of wind energy developments should be modified to encourage the siting of wind energy developments in these areas. Such changes include, but are not limited to:

A. Making wind energy development a permitted use within certain parts of the State's unorganized and deorganized areas; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §5 (NEW).]

B. Refining certain procedures of the Department of Environmental Protection and the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission; and [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §5 (NEW).]

C. Because the Legislature recognizes that wind turbines are potentially a highly visible feature of the landscape that will have an impact on views, judging the effects of wind energy development on scenic character and existing uses related to scenic character based on whether the development significantly compromises views from a scenic resource of state or national significance such that the development has an unreasonable adverse effect on the scenic character or existing uses related to the scenic character of that resource. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §5 (NEW).]

The Legislature further finds that, while wind energy may be developed at many sites with minimal site-specific environmental impacts, wind energy developments may have, in addition to their beneficial environmental effects and potential scenic impacts, specific adverse environmental effects that must be addressed in state permitting decisions pursuant to approval criteria tailored to address issues presented by wind energy development. Nothing in this section is meant to diminish the importance of addressing as appropriate site-specific impacts on natural values, including, but not limited to, wildlife, wildlife habitats and other ecological values.

The Legislature further finds that development of the State's wind energy resources should be undertaken in a manner that ensures significant tangible benefits to the people of the State, including, but not limited to, residents of communities that host wind energy facilities; and that the State should seek to host a substantial amount of wind energy as part of a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and meet the goals established in the state climate action plan developed pursuant to Title 38, section 577.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §5 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2003, c. 665, §3 (NEW). 2005, c. 646, §3 (AMD). 2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §§4, 5 (AMD). 2007, c. 693, §37 (AFF). 2007, c. 693, §4 (AMD). 2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §2 (AMD).

35-A §3403. SPECIFIC MEASURES TO SUPPORT WIND ENERGY

1. Monitoring. The commission shall monitor electricity markets and sale opportunities physically accessible to wind power installations in this State to determine whether such markets and opportunities are available for the sale of wind energy in accordance with federal and state law.

[2003, c. 665, §3 (NEW) .]

2. Legal action. After consultation with the Attorney General, the commission may initiate regulatory and other legal action to protect access to markets by wind power facilities located in the State.

[2003, c. 665, §3 (NEW) .]

3. Certification. The commission may certify a person as a community wind power generator if the commission determines that such a certification would support construction of a community wind power generation facility in this State and that the person will be the owner of that facility. The person must demonstrate to the commission that the construction of the community wind power generation facility would not be likely to occur absent the availability of the benefits under Title 36, section 1760, subsection 89 and Title 36, sections 2017 and 5219-CC. The commission may not certify a person as a community wind power generator with respect to a community wind power generation facility for which the person commenced the site permit application process prior to August 23, 2006.

[2007, c. 693, §37 (AFF); 2007, c. 693, §5 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2003, c. 665, §3 (NEW). 2007, c. 693, §37 (AFF). 2007, c. 693, §5 (AMD).

35-A §3404. DETERMINATION OF PUBLIC POLICY; STATE WIND ENERGY GENERATION GOALS

1. Encouragement of wind energy-related development. It is the policy of the State in furtherance of the goals established in subsection 2, to encourage the attraction of appropriately sited development related to wind energy, including any additional transmission and other energy infrastructure needed to transport additional offshore wind energy to market, consistent with all state environmental standards; the permitting and financing of wind energy projects; and the siting, permitting, financing and construction of wind energy research and manufacturing facilities.

[2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §3 (AMD) .]

2. State wind energy generation goals. The goals for wind energy development in the State are that there be:

A. At least 2,000 megawatts of installed capacity by 2015; [2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §4 (AMD) .]

B. At least 3,000 megawatts of installed capacity by 2020, including 300 megawatts or more from generation facilities located in coastal waters, as defined by Title 12, section 6001, subsection 6, or in proximate federal waters; and [2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §4 (AMD) .]

C. At least 8,000 megawatts of installed capacity by 2030, including 5,000 megawatts from generation facilities located in coastal waters, as defined by Title 12, section 6001, subsection 6, or in proximate federal waters. [2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §4 (NEW) .]

[2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §4 (AMD) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2005, c. 646, §4 (NEW). 2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §6 (RPR). 2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §§3, 4 (AMD).

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**Maine Revised Statute Title 35-A, Chapter 34-A: EXPEDITED
PERMITTING OF GRID-SCALE WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT**

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35-A §3451. DEFINITIONS

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

1. Associated facilities. "Associated facilities" means elements of a wind energy development other than its generating facilities that are necessary to the proper operation and maintenance of the wind energy development, including but not limited to buildings, access roads, generator lead lines and substations.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

1-B. Community benefit agreement. "Community benefit agreement" means an agreement between the developer of an expedited wind energy development and a host community that involves payments by the developer to the host community to be utilized for public purposes, including, but not limited to, for property tax reductions, economic development projects, land and natural resource conservation, tourism promotion or reduction of energy costs, and that specifies in writing:

A. The value of any lump sum payments made by the developer to the host community; and [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §2 (NEW).]

B. Any payment schedule and associated terms and conditions for payments to be made over time by the developer to the host community. [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §2 (NEW).]

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §2 (NEW) .]

1-C. Community benefits package. "Community benefits package" means the aggregate collection of tangible benefits resulting from any of the following:

A. Payments, not including property tax payments, to the host community or communities, including, but not limited to, payments under community benefit agreements; [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §3 (NEW).]

B. Payments that reduce energy costs in the host community or communities; and [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §3 (NEW).]

C. Any donations for land or natural resource conservation. [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §3 (NEW).]

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §3 (NEW) .]

2. Department. "Department" means the Department of Environmental Protection.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

3. Expedited permitting area. "Expedited permitting area" means:

A. The organized areas of the State in their entirety, but not including waters subject to tidal influence, so that the edge of the area that is subject to tidal action during the highest tide level for the year in which an activity is proposed as identified in tide tables published by the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Service defines the boundary of the expedited permitting area on lands abutting waters subject to tidal influence; and [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

B. Specific places within the State's unorganized and deorganized areas, as defined by Title 12, section 682, subsection 1, that are identified by rule by the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission in accordance with this chapter. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

4. Expedited wind energy development. "Expedited wind energy development" means a grid-scale wind energy development that is proposed for location within an expedited permitting area.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

5. Generating facilities. "Generating facilities" means wind turbines and towers and transmission lines, not including generator lead lines, that are immediately associated with the wind turbines.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

6. Grid-scale wind energy development. "Grid-scale wind energy development" means a wind energy development that is of a size that would qualify as a development of state or regional significance that may substantially affect the environment as defined under Title 38, section 482, subsection 2, paragraph A or paragraph C.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

7. Host community. "Host community" means :

A. The following entities:

- (1) A municipality or plantation in which the generating facilities of an expedited wind energy development are located;
- (2) If the generating facilities of an expedited wind energy development are located in a township, the county in which those facilities are located;
- (3) If the generating facilities of an expedited wind energy development are located on Passamaquoddy Indian territory, as defined in Title 30, section 6203, subsection 6, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, if the Passamaquoddy Tribe notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development;
- (4) If the generating facilities of an expedited wind energy development are located on Penobscot Indian territory, as defined in Title 30, section 6203, subsection 9, the Penobscot Nation if the Penobscot Nation notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development; or
- (5) If the generating facilities of an expedited wind energy development are located on Qualifying Band Trust Land, the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, if the Aroostook Band of Micmacs notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development; and [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §4 (NEW) .]

B. When the generating facilities of an expedited wind energy development are located within the State's unorganized or deorganized areas and the developer selects a municipality; plantation; township; Passamaquoddy Indian territory, as defined in Title 30, section 6203, subsection 6; Penobscot Indian territory, as defined in Title 30, section 6203, subsection 9; or Qualifying Band Trust Land proximate to the location of the generating facilities for the purpose of providing specific tangible benefits:

- (1) In the case of a municipality or plantation that is selected, the municipality or plantation;
- (2) In the case of a township that is selected, the county in which that township is located;
- (3) In the case of Passamaquoddy Indian territory that is selected, the Passamaquoddy Tribe if the Passamaquoddy Tribe notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development;
- (4) In the case of Penobscot Indian territory that is selected, the Penobscot Nation if the Penobscot Nation notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development; and

(5) In the case of Qualifying Band Trust Land that is selected, the Aroostook Band of Micmacs, if the Aroostook Band of Micmacs notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development. [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §4 (NEW).]

An expedited wind energy development may have multiple host communities.

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §4 (AMD) .]

8. Primary siting authority. "Primary siting authority" means:

A. The department, in the case of an expedited wind energy development subject to the department's jurisdiction pursuant to Title 38, chapter 3, subchapter 1, article 6, including, but not limited to, a development subject to the department's jurisdiction pursuant to Title 38, section 488, subsection 9; or [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

B. The Maine Land Use Regulation Commission, in the case of an expedited wind energy development subject to the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission's jurisdiction pursuant to Title 12, chapter 206-A. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

8-A. Qualifying Band Trust Land. "Qualifying Band Trust Land" means Band Trust Land, as defined in the federal Aroostook Band of Micmacs Settlement Act, Public Law 102-171, 105 Stat. 1143 (1991), over which the Aroostook Band of Micmacs possesses municipal authority with respect to expedited wind energy development. For purposes of this subsection, "municipal authority" means the rights, privileges, powers and immunities of a municipality that are specified in legislation specifically authorizing the exercise of those government powers and that are equivalent to the rights, privileges, powers and immunities possessed by the Penobscot Nation and the Passamaquoddy Tribe with respect to expedited wind energy development within their respective Indian territories pursuant to Title 30, section 6206.

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §5 (NEW) .]

9. Scenic resource of state or national significance. "Scenic resource of state or national significance" means an area or place owned by the public or to which the public has a legal right of access that is:

A. A national natural landmark, federally designated wilderness area or other comparable outstanding natural and cultural feature, such as the Orono Bog or Meddybemps Heath; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

B. A property listed on the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, including, but not limited to, the Rockland Breakwater Light and Fort Knox; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

C. A national or state park; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

D. A great pond that is:

(1) One of the 66 great ponds located in the State's organized area identified as having outstanding or significant scenic quality in the "Maine's Finest Lakes" study published by the Executive Department, State Planning Office in October 1989; or

(2) One of the 280 great ponds in the State's unorganized or deorganized areas designated as outstanding or significant from a scenic perspective in the "Maine Wildlands Lakes Assessment" published by the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission in June 1987; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

E. A segment of a scenic river or stream identified as having unique or outstanding scenic attributes listed in Appendix G of the "Maine Rivers Study" published by the Department of Conservation in 1982; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

F. A scenic viewpoint located on state public reserved land or on a trail that is used exclusively for pedestrian use, such as the Appalachian Trail, that the Department of Conservation designates by rule adopted in accordance with section 3457; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

G. A scenic turnout constructed by the Department of Transportation pursuant to Title 23, section 954 on a public road that has been designated by the Commissioner of Transportation pursuant to Title 23, section 4206, subsection 1, paragraph G as a scenic highway; or [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

H. Scenic viewpoints located in the coastal area, as defined by Title 38, section 1802, subsection 1, that are ranked as having state or national significance in terms of scenic quality in:

(1) One of the scenic inventories prepared for and published by the Executive Department, State Planning Office: "Method for Coastal Scenic Landscape Assessment with Field Results for Kittery to Scarborough and Cape Elizabeth to South Thomaston," Dominic, et al., October 1987; "Scenic Inventory Mainland Sites of Penobscot Bay," Dewan and Associates, et al., August 1990; or "Scenic Inventory: Islesboro, Vinalhaven, North Haven and Associated Offshore Islands," Dewan and Associates, June 1992; or

(2) A scenic inventory developed by or prepared for the Executive Department, State Planning Office in accordance with section 3457. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

10. Tangible benefits. "Tangible benefits" means environmental or economic improvements or benefits to residents of this State attributable to the construction, operation and maintenance of an expedited wind energy development, including but not limited to: property tax payments resulting from the development; other payments to a host community, including, but not limited to, payments under a community benefit agreement; construction-related employment; local purchase of materials; employment in operations and maintenance; reduced property taxes; reduced electrical rates; land or natural resource conservation; performance of construction, operations and maintenance activities by trained, qualified and licensed workers in accordance with Title 32, chapter 17 and other applicable laws; or other comparable benefits, with particular attention to assurance of such benefits to the host community or communities to the extent practicable and affected neighboring communities.

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §6 (AMD) .]

11. Wind energy development. "Wind energy development" means a development that uses a windmill or wind turbine to convert wind energy to electrical energy for sale or use by a person other than the generator. A wind energy development includes generating facilities and associated facilities.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW). 2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §§2-6 (AMD).

35-A §3452. DETERMINATION OF EFFECT ON SCENIC CHARACTER AND RELATED EXISTING USES

1. Application of standard. In making findings regarding the effect of an expedited wind energy development on scenic character and existing uses related to scenic character pursuant to Title 12, section 685-B, subsection 4 or Title 38, section 484, subsection 3 or section 480-D, the primary siting authority shall determine, in the manner provided in subsection 3, whether the development significantly compromises views from a scenic resource of state or national significance such that the development has an unreasonable adverse effect on the scenic character or existing uses related to scenic character of the scenic resource of state or national significance. Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, determination that a wind energy

development fits harmoniously into the existing natural environment in terms of potential effects on scenic character and existing uses related to scenic character is not required for approval under either Title 12, section 685-B, subsection 4, paragraph C or Title 38, section 484, subsection 3.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

2. Exception; certain associated facilities. The primary siting authority shall evaluate the effect of associated facilities of a wind energy development in terms of potential effects on scenic character and existing uses related to scenic character in accordance with Title 12, section 685-B, subsection 4, paragraph C or Title 38, section 484, subsection 3, in the manner provided for development other than wind energy development, if the primary siting authority determines that application of the standard in subsection 1 to the development may result in unreasonable adverse effects due to the scope, scale, location or other characteristics of the associated facilities. An interested party may submit information regarding this determination to the primary siting authority for its consideration. The primary siting authority shall make a determination pursuant to this subsection within 30 days of its acceptance of the application as complete for processing.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

3. Evaluation criteria. In making its determination pursuant to subsection 1, and in determining whether an applicant for an expedited wind energy development must provide a visual impact assessment in accordance with subsection 4, the primary siting authority shall consider:

- A. The significance of the potentially affected scenic resource of state or national significance; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- B. The existing character of the surrounding area; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- C. The expectations of the typical viewer; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- D. The expedited wind energy development's purpose and the context of the proposed activity; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- E. The extent, nature and duration of potentially affected public uses of the scenic resource of state or national significance and the potential effect of the generating facilities' presence on the public's continued use and enjoyment of the scenic resource of state or national significance; and [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- F. The scope and scale of the potential effect of views of the generating facilities on the scenic resource of state or national significance, including but not limited to issues related to the number and extent of turbines visible from the scenic resource of state or national significance, the distance from the scenic resource of state or national significance and the effect of prominent features of the development on the landscape. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

A finding by the primary siting authority that the development's generating facilities are a highly visible feature in the landscape is not a solely sufficient basis for determination that an expedited wind energy project has an unreasonable adverse effect on the scenic character and existing uses related to scenic character of a scenic resource of state or national significance. In making its determination under subsection 1, the primary siting authority shall consider insignificant the effects of portions of the development's generating facilities located more than 8 miles, measured horizontally, from a scenic resource of state or national significance.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

4. Visual impact assessment; rebuttable presumption. An applicant for an expedited wind energy development shall provide the primary siting authority with a visual impact assessment of the development that addresses the evaluation criteria in subsection 3 if the primary siting authority determines such an assessment is necessary in accordance with subsection 3. There is a rebuttable presumption that a visual impact assessment is not required for those portions of the development's generating facilities that are located

more than 3 miles, measured horizontally, from a scenic resource of state or national significance. The primary siting authority may require a visual impact assessment for portions of the development's generating facilities located more than 3 miles and up to 8 miles from a scenic resource of state or national significance if it finds there is substantial evidence that a visual impact assessment is needed to determine if there is the potential for significant adverse effects on the scenic resource of state or national significance. Information intended to rebut the presumption must be submitted to the primary siting authority by any interested person within 30 days of acceptance of the application as complete for processing. The primary siting authority shall determine if the presumption is rebutted based on a preponderance of evidence in the record.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .

35-A §3453. ADDITIONS TO THE EXPEDITED PERMITTING AREA

The Maine Land Use Regulation Commission may, by rule adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, add a specified place in the State's unorganized or deorganized areas to the expedited permitting area. In order to add a specified place to the expedited permitting area, the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission must determine that the proposed addition to the expedited permitting area: [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

1. Geographic extension. Involves a logical geographic extension of the currently designated expedited permitting area;

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

2. Meets state goals. Is important to meeting the state goals for wind energy development established in section 3404; and

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

3. Principal values and goals. Would not compromise the principal values and the goals identified in the comprehensive land use plan adopted by the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission pursuant to Title 12, section 685-C.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

Rules adopted by the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .

35-A §3454. DETERMINATION OF TANGIBLE BENEFITS; REQUIREMENTS

In making findings pursuant to Title 12, section 685-B, subsection 4 or Title 38, section 484, subsection 3, the primary siting authority shall presume that an expedited wind energy development provides energy and emissions-related benefits described in section 3402 and shall make additional findings regarding other tangible benefits provided by the development. The Department of Labor, the Executive Department, State Planning Office and the Public Utilities Commission shall provide review comments if requested by the primary siting authority. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

1. Documentation. As part of any permit application for an expedited wind energy development, the applicant shall include the following information regarding tangible benefits, except that the applicant may submit the information required under paragraph D as an addendum to the permit application during the period in which the application is pending:

- A. Estimated jobs to be created statewide and in the host community or communities, as a result of construction, maintenance and operations of the project; [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- B. Estimated annual generation of wind energy; [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- C. Projected property tax payments; [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- D. A description of the community benefits package, including but not limited to community benefit agreement payments, to be provided in accordance with the requirements of subsection 2; and [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- E. Any other tangible benefits to be provided by the project. [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

2. Community benefits package requirement. Except as provided in subsection 3, to demonstrate that an expedited wind energy development provides significant tangible benefits as required in Title 12, section 685-B, subsection 4-B and Title 38, section 484, subsection 10, the applicant for an expedited wind energy development is required to establish a community benefits package valued at no less than \$4,000 per year per wind turbine included in the expedited wind energy development, averaged over a 20-year period. This subsection does not affect the property tax obligations of an expedited wind energy development.

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

3. Community benefits package requirement; exceptions. The community benefits package requirement under subsection 2:

- A. Is waived for any expedited wind energy development that:
 - (1) Has an installed capacity of less than 20 megawatts; or
 - (2) Is owned by a nonprofit entity, a public entity or a quasi-public entity; and [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]
- B. Does not apply to those turbines included in the development that are located:
 - (1) In a host community in which the legislative body has voted to waive or reduce the community benefits package requirement;
 - (2) On Passamaquoddy Indian territory, as defined in Title 30, section 6203, subsection 6, unless the Passamaquoddy Tribe notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for the purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development;
 - (3) On Penobscot Indian territory, as defined in Title 30, section 6203, subsection 9, unless the Penobscot Nation notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for the purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development; or
 - (4) On Qualifying Band Trust Land unless the Aroostook Band of Micmacs notifies the primary siting authority that it chooses to be considered a host community for the purposes of this chapter with respect to the expedited wind energy development.

The community benefits package requirement applies to any turbines of the development that are not exempted under subparagraph (1), (2), (3) or (4). [2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

Nothing in this subsection limits a host community's authority to require an expedited wind energy development to enter into a community benefit agreement and to fulfill its property tax obligations.

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

4. Community benefit agreement payments to counties. When generating facilities of an expedited wind energy development are located within an unorganized or deorganized area other than within a plantation, community benefit agreement payments provided to the county as the host community in accordance with this section may be used for projects and programs of public benefit located anywhere within that county.

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

5. Promoting economic development and resource conservation; assistance to host communities.

To the extent practicable within existing resources, the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Executive Department, State Planning Office, shall provide, upon the request of a host community, assistance for the purpose of helping the host community maximize the economic development and resource conservation benefits from tax payments and payments made pursuant to a community benefit agreement or a community benefits package in connection with expedited wind energy developments. As part of this assistance, the department and the office shall support host communities in identifying additional funding and developing regional economic and natural resource conservation strategies.

[2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW). 2009, c. 642, Pt. A, §7 (AMD).

35-A §3455. DETERMINATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY-RELATED SETBACKS

In making findings pursuant to Title 12, section 685-B, subsection 4 or Title 38, section 484, subsection 3 on whether a wind energy development must be constructed with setbacks adequate to protect public safety, the primary siting authority must consider the recommendation of a professional, licensed civil engineer as well as any applicable setback recommended by a manufacturer of the generating facilities. The primary siting authority may require submission of this information as part of the application. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).

35-A §3456. SITING CONSIDERATIONS FOR SMALLER-SCALE WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN ORGANIZED AREAS

1. Construction and operation requirements. A person may not construct or operate a wind energy development, other than a grid-scale wind energy development, that is located in the State's organized area without first obtaining a certification from the department that the generating facilities:

A. Will meet the requirements of the noise control rules adopted by the Board of Environmental Protection pursuant to Title 38, chapter 3, subchapter 1, article 6; [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

B. Will be designed and sited to avoid unreasonable adverse shadow flicker effects; and [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

C. Will be constructed with setbacks adequate to protect public safety. In making a finding pursuant to this paragraph, the department shall consider the recommendation of a professional, licensed civil engineer as well as any applicable setback recommended by a manufacturer of the generating facilities. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW).]

A person proposing a wind energy development subject to certification under this section shall apply to the department for certification using an application provided by the department and may not begin construction until the certification is received.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

2. Fees; outside review; approval process. The department may charge a developer an appropriate fee for its review and certification pursuant to this section. Certification may be conditioned on specific requirements, including but not limited to setbacks from residential structures to address noise or safety concerns. The department may use an outside reviewer as provided in Title 38, section 344-A. If no other approval by the department is required for the development, the department shall issue its certification within 185 days of its acceptance of a request for certification as complete pursuant to Title 38, section 344. At the request of an applicant, the department may put the certification review period on hold. If another approval by the department is required for the development, the department shall consolidate its process for certification under this section with that regarding other approvals by the department as provided in the department's rules and may extend the review period as provided in those rules. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the department's certification pursuant to this section regarding a development that does not otherwise require the department's approval pursuant to this Title is not itself subject to judicial review as final agency action or otherwise, except as an aspect of an appeal of a pertinent municipal land use decision.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

3. Enforcement of standards. Following certification under this section and during construction and operation, the standards in subsection 1 for a wind energy development subject to certification under this section may be enforced by the municipality in which the generating facilities are located at the municipality's discretion pursuant to Title 30-A, section 4452. The department is not responsible for enforcement of this section.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

4. Exemption. Certification under this section is not required for a wind energy development with a generating capacity of less than 100 kilowatts.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .

35-A §3457. RULEMAKING; SCENIC VIEWPOINT; SCENIC INVENTORY

1. Scenic viewpoint. The Department of Conservation shall adopt rules to designate scenic viewpoints located on state public reserved land or on a trail that is used exclusively for pedestrian use, such as the Appalachian Trail, that have state or national significance from a scenic perspective based on criteria modeled after those used in the "Maine Rivers Study" published by the Department of Conservation in 1982 and "Maine Wildlands Lakes Assessment" published by the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission in June 1987 and consideration of the criteria in section 3452, subsection 3.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

2. Scenic inventory. The Executive Department, State Planning Office shall adopt rules regarding the methodology for conducting a scenic inventory of scenic resources of state or national significance that are located in the coastal area, as defined by Title 38, section 1802, subsection 1, in a manner comparable to that used for an inventory listed in section 3451, subsection 9, paragraph H, subparagraph (1). The office may contract with an outside entity for the preparation of a scenic inventory conducted pursuant to the methodology developed pursuant to this subsection.

[2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. [2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2007, c. 661, Pt. A, §7 (NEW) .

35-A §3458. JUDICIAL APPEAL; MUNICIPAL PERMITTING DECISION

Any judicial appeal of a municipal decision regarding permitting of an expedited wind energy development that is taken in the manner provided in the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 80B must be heard and determined by the Superior Court as expeditiously as possible. [2009, c. 642, Pt. B, §2 (NEW) .]

SECTION HISTORY

2009, c. 642, Pt. B, §2 (NEW) .

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