FAQs

HEMLOCK HOLLOW WIND PROJECT
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What is the Hemlock Hollow Wind Project?

The Hemlock Hollow Wind Project is a proposed up to 95-megawatt wind energy generation facility with up to 24 wind turbines located on private land in the Towns of Allegany and Olean in Cattaraugus County, New York.

What is the timeline for the Hemlock Hollow Wind Project?

The Project is currently in the development phase, which includes local and state permitting, land leasing, and several types of environmental studies. After development is complete, construction will begin and last approximately 12-18 months. The Project's operational lifespan will be at least 25 years.

What benefits will the Hemlock Hollow Wind Project bring to the local community?

The Project is expected to provide a preliminary estimate of tens of millions of dollars in local revenue to the Towns of Allegany and Olean; Cattaraugus County; local school districts; local fire districts; and landowners participating in the Project. The Towns are also expected to share a preliminary estimate of hundreds of thousands of dollars annually through development of a Host Community Agreement and additional estimated annual revenue of tens of thousands of dollars will be split among the communities through a Shared Community Payment Program.

How much of a project's power is available to the host community?

When energy enters the electric grid, it is distributed based on real-time demand. Towns, businesses, or industrial facilities in the project's area will be the first place the energy will flow. Grid interconnection of the Hemlock Hollow Wind Project will occur at the Homer Hill to Dugan Road 115kV line and allow the energy generated by the Project to flow primarily into the City of Olean and directly benefit residents in the surrounding area.

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What are the primary factors that Liberty Renewables considers when siting a wind project?

Primary factors for new wind project siting include a strong wind resource, proximity of existing transmission infrastructure with interconnection capacity, availability of compatible lands with low expected impacts to environmental and agricultural resources, and local interest from private landowners and municipalities.

Who oversees the permitting process for wind projects in New York State?

Renewable energy projects of 25 megawatts or larger are required to obtain a siting permit from the New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES) under Article VIII of the NYS Public Service Law.

How can the local community be involved in a wind project's development process?

Liberty Renewables regularly provides project updates to town government officials, project participants, and project neighbors, and reflects these updates on the project website pages. Liberty Renewables also offers a toll-free phone number and a contact form on the website.

What environmental studies must be completed before constructing a wind project?

NYS Article VIII siting regulations require developers to conduct wetland and stream delineations, cultural resource surveys, visual impact studies, and numerous avian surveys. These surveys require hundreds to thousands of hours spent on the ground and are always performed by a third-party expert consultant.

How long does project construction typically last and how are its impacts on local roads mitigated?

Project construction typically spans 12–18 months. Liberty Renewables will work with host communities to develop a Road Use Agreement, which outlines a commitment to necessary repair of local roads that may be damaged by heavy equipment, construction, or maintenance activities.

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How far from homes, roads, and public spaces will wind turbines be located?

State regulations and turbine manufacturers outline strict setback requirements based on the tallest wind turbine model under consideration for a given project. Setback distances are determined by measuring a straight line from the midpoint of a wind turbine tower to the nearest point on a building foundation, property line, or other landmark.

What is shadow flicker?

Wind turbine blades can cast shadows that move across the ground and nearby structures, creating a "flicker" effect. Shadow flicker is limited by several factors, including the season and time of day, wind direction and speed, and cloud cover, among others, meaning it does not occur on cloudy days, becomes weaker with distance, and is most common during sunrise and sunset.

How much sound do wind turbines emit?

On average, land-based, utility-scale wind turbines produce sound levels that fall in the range of 35-45 decibels when heard from 1,000 feet away. At this distance, turbines are typically no louder than a residential refrigerator (~50 decibels).

What impacts do wind turbines have on local birds, bats, and other wildlife populations?

Researchers have identified that wind energy has one of the lowest impacts on wildlife and their habitats of any utility-scale method for generating electricity. To date, there have been no significant population impacts documented for any one species due to wind energy development. Liberty Renewables conducts environmental impact studies for every project to ensure that projects are sited in areas where impacts to wildlife species are minimized.

What is wind turbine ice throw and how is it mitigated?

Ice throw is the term used to describe the shedding of ice from wind turbine blades when a turbine is exposed to freezing rain, fog, or other conditions that produce ice build-up. To mitigate ice throw, turbine suppliers offer cold climate solutions that lower the risk of ice buildup on turbine components.

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How are local emergency responders trained in the event of a facility emergency?

Liberty Renewables creates detailed Site Security and Safety Response Plans for each project in collaboration with local emergency services and fire department officials. Training is also given to local emergency responders ahead of construction, as well as annually throughout project operations.

What types of decommissioning plans are established for wind projects?

Before a wind project is approved, a Decommissioning and Site Restoration Plan must be established and undergo rigorous NYS and local review. A decommissioning bond paid for by Liberty Renewables will be established prior to project construction, posted in escrow, and shared by the towns within the project site. Towns are not responsible for decommissioning costs.

What happens to wind turbines after decommissioning?

Up to approximately 94 percent of wind turbine components are recyclable since they are largely comprised of steel. Recycling innovations continue to reduce landfill use and conserve resources, ensuring that wind energy remains an environmentally responsible solution from operation through decommissioning.