

# Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

## Staff Briefing Papers

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Meeting Date: August 18, 2016 .....Agenda Item \*3

Company: Odell Wind Farm, LLC

Docket No. IP-6914/WS-13-843

In the Matter of the Application of Odell Wind Farm, LLC for a Large Wind Energy Conversion Site Permit for the up to 200-MW Odell Wind Farm in Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin and Watonwan Counties

Issues: Should the Commission approve the post-construction noise study methodology?

Staff: Michael Kaluzniak

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### Relevant Documents

Order Granting a Site Permit and approving Avian and Bat Protection Plan..... July 17, 2014  
Odell Wind Post-Construction Noise Study Methodology.....April 18, 2016  
Department of Commerce Compliance Review .....July 26, 2016

The attached materials are work papers of the Commission staff. They are intended for use by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission and are based upon information already in the record unless noted otherwise.

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## Statement of the Issue

Should the Commission approve the post-construction noise study proposal?

## Project Overview

The project entails construction of a large wind energy conversion system of up to 200 megawatts of nameplate capacity in Cottonwood, Jackson, Martin and Watonwan Counties. The project includes construction of 100 Vestas Model V110 2.0-Megawatt wind turbine generators.

## Procedural History

On July 17, 2104, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) issued a site permit to Odell Wind Farm, LLC for the construction of a 200-megawatt wind farm and associated facilities.

On April 18, 2016 Odell Wind Farm, LLC filed its *Post-Construction Noise Study Methodology* for the Odell Wind Farm Project pursuant to Section 6.6 of the site permit.

On July 26, 2016, the Department of Commerce Energy Environmental Review and Analysis (EERA) filed comments and recommendations concerning the noise study methodology.

## Site Permit Conditions

The requirements concerning a post-construction noise study are contained within Section 6.6 of the site permit:

### 6.6 Noise

The Permittee shall file a proposal with the Commission at least fourteen (14) days prior to the pre-operation compliance meeting for the conduct of a post-construction noise study. Upon the approval of the Commission, the Permittee shall carry out the study. The study shall be designed to determine the operating LWECs noise levels at different frequencies and at various distances from the turbines at various wind directions and speeds. The Permittee shall file the study within eighteen (18) months after commercial operation.

## Department of Commerce Compliance Review

In comments submitted on July 29, 2016, EERA stated the Protocol was developed following the *Guidance for Large Wind Energy Conversion System Noise Study Protocol and Report*

developed by EERA in coordination with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.<sup>1</sup> EERA recommended that the Commission accept Odell Wind Farm, LLC's proposed noise study protocol. EERA found that the proposed noise study protocol was properly designed and was compliant with the conditions of the site permit.

### **Staff Discussion**

Staff agrees with the recommendation of EERA that the Commission accept Odell Wind Farm, LLC's *Post-Construction Noise Measurement Study Protocol*.

### **Commission Decision Options**

- A. Should the Commission approve the post-construction noise study proposal?
  1. Approve the proposed *Post-Construction Noise Measurement Study Protocol* pursuant to section 6.6 of the site permit.
  2. Do not approve the *Post-Construction Noise Measurement Study Protocol*.
  3. Take some other action deemed more appropriate.

**Staff Recommendation:** A1

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<sup>1</sup> *Guidance for Large Wind Energy Conversion System Noise Study Protocol and Report – Guidance for Developing and e-Filing the LWECs Noise Study Protocol and Report Submittals to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission*, <http://mn.gov/commerce/energyfacilities/documents/FINAL%20LWECs%20Guidance%20Noise%20Study%20Protocol%20JULY%209%202013.pdf>, October 8, 2012.