

Ohio Wind Power FAQ

Who oversees wind power development in the state of Ohio?

The Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) regulates major utilities facilities and economically significant wind farms (greater than 5 megawatts). The OPSB reviews each application for a Certification of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need by gathering information from stakeholders and conducting an independent review before making its decision on the application.

What is the status of wind power development in Ohio?

Since 2008, developers operating in Ohio have moved several wind farm projects forward. The Blue Creek Wind Farm (Van Wert and Paulding counties), the Timber Road Wind Farm I-III projects (Paulding County), and the Hog Creek Wind Farm I and II projects (Hardin County) are operational. Combined, these wind farms consist of nearly 300 wind turbines with a generating capacity of more than 550 megawatts of electricity. The OPSB has approved wind power facilities in seven additional cases, several of which are currently under construction. Additional wind power projects are either pending before the OPSB or in the pre-application stage.

What are the setback requirements for siting wind turbines in Ohio?

Ohio law establishes a minimum setback distance for wind turbines. For wind farm applications submitted to the OPSB on or after September 15, 2014, turbines must be located at least 1,125 feet from the tip of the turbine blade at ninety degrees to the nearest adjacent property line, unless the applicant obtains the appropriate waivers.

How does the OPSB address health and safety concerns such as ice throw, blade shear, and noise?

Ohio Administrative Code requires that applicants evaluate and describe the potential impact from ice throw at the nearest property boundary to each turbine, including plans to minimize potential impacts if warranted. This evaluation must also be completed for blade shear.

Additionally, applicants seeking to develop wind farms are required to give careful consideration in evaluating and describing the operational noise levels expected at adjacent residences. Ohio law does not set a maximum noise standard or a set decibel allowance for wind turbine operations. Therefore, the OPSB reviews each applicant's noise assessment on an individual basis and may propose avoidance or mitigation measures as necessary.

How does the OPSB address shadow flicker?

Shadow flicker from wind turbines can occur when moving turbine blades pass in front of the sun, thereby creating alternating changes in light intensity or shadows. Shadow flicker primarily occurs at sunrise and sunset when the sun is low on the horizon and a turbine is facing a receptor. Ohio law does not provide standards for frequencies or duration of or exposure to shadow flicker. The OPSB reviews the applicant's forecasts of shadow flicker and may mandate mitigation to limit the amount of time per year that it may affect a residence.

Does the OPSB consider the effects on aviation by a wind farm development?

The Applicant is required to coordinate with the Federal Aviation Administration and the Ohio Department of Transportation's Aviation Division to determine if their proposal would have an effect on navigable air

space, and, if applicable, develop appropriate mitigation measures. This is also reviewed by the OPSB staff in their investigation.

What happens when the turbines are decommissioned?

Commercial scale wind turbines typically have a life expectancy of 20-25 years. The Ohio Administrative Code requires applicants to describe a plan for decommissioning each proposed wind facility and address the issue of financial arrangements designed to assure the funding necessary to disassemble the facility. Often, when a certificate is given to a project, it is under a condition that the site must be restored to the same topography that existed prior to construction upon decommissioning.

How does the OPSB address the issue of roads and bridges within a wind farm development project?

Transporting commercial wind turbines often presents a logistical concern for the applicant and community because of the intensive use of local roadways. The OPSB requires developers to evaluate and describe the anticipated impact to roads and bridges associated with construction vehicles and equipment delivery. Often, the applicant enters a road use agreement with local officials, requiring pre-construction upgrades, post-construction repairs, and financial assurance to return all roads to pre-construction condition or better.

Where can I find more information?

Additional information about the OPSB, its process, and rules may be found at www.opsb.ohio.gov.