

MEETING SUMMARY
December 18, 2007
WIND POWER TASK FORCE MEETING

Introductory matters

Chair Alec Giffen opened the meeting and welcomed those in attendance. Mr. Giffen outlined the primary focus of the meeting as consideration of two straw proposals developed in accordance with discussion at the Task Force's December 7, 2007, meeting in order to move toward consensus on recommendations to the Governor regarding the permitting of grid scale wind power facilities.

Presentations

Following up on the Task Force's request made at its December 7, 2007, meeting, PUC attorney Mitch Tannenbaum outlined the manner in which the PUC addresses the issues of need and public benefits in issuing certificates of public convenience and necessity for utilities' transmission line projects.

Representative MacDonald updated the Task Force on his discussions with University of Maine President Kennedy on the University's initiatives regarding wind power related research and development. The Task Force agreed that further information on these efforts, including those regarding design of composite materials for turbine blades, would be useful.

Pete Didisheim updated the Task Force on the status of the study of New England states' wind energy development potential and needs being undertaken Bob Grace and colleagues. Mr. Didsheim shared a map depicting modeling results from changes in modeling assumptions made at the suggestion of the Task Force and others. That map will be made available at the Task Force's website - www.maine.gov/windpower/ (follow "Meeting Summaries" link).

Karin Tilberg presented a letter to the Task Force from Governor Baldacci thanking the Task Force for its considerable efforts to date and encouraging a concerted effort to forge consensus recommendations which would be a key tool to helping the State to achieve policy goals underlying his executive order. The letter will be posted in the project website cited above.

Discussion of straw proposals regarding siting of grid-scale projects; next steps

Alec Giffen presented two straw proposals stemming from and addressing issues raised at the Task Force's December 7, 2007, meeting. The straw proposals presented will be posted on the Task Force's above-noted website.

The Task Force discussed these proposals at length. Discussion focused principally on the pros and cons of identification of one or more zones in LURC

jurisdiction where wind power would be either effectively encouraged or discouraged. There was general agreement that it would be useful to consider revision of LURC's zoning scheme to identify not only Green Zones, as proposed under one straw proposal, where there would be both regulatory and financial incentives to site wind power projects, but also zones in which wind development may be problematic and those in which development may be appropriate based on consideration of more detailed, project-specific information through rezoning. In addition, there was general agreement on the merits of further consideration of aspects of the straw proposal under which DEP would have the lead role in permitting wind projects statewide using a more streamlined decision-making process.

Following discussion, the Task Force requested preparation of the following information for its consideration at a meeting on January 9, 2008:

- *Hybrid siting proposal which merges elements of the two proposals discussed at this meeting.* Staff will develop this hybrid option.
- *Specification of changes to existing siting laws and regulations needed to true-up and promote state-wide consistency regarding decision making criteria.* Task Force members agreed to review information presented by Pete Didsheim at the Task Force's September 26th meeting as a starting point and e-mail their suggestions regarding existing regulatory and zoning standards and criteria inappropriate for wind power development and how they might be revised.
- *An initial assessment, using existing, pertinent natural resources-related information, including that developed by AMC for mountainous areas in western Maine, of where "red", "amber" and "green" zones might be located.* David Publicover, Jody Jones and Pete Didsheim agreed to take the lead in putting this information together. In accordance with the Task Force's discussion, "red" zones are those in which natural resource values or related public uses make wind development highly problematic. Green zones are those in which LURC would make wind development an allowable use under a revised zoning scheme. Amber zones are those with notable natural resources values and related public uses in which wind development may be allowed pursuant to rezoning.