



## Council Backs Compromise on Siting Standards

by Michael Vickerman  
RENEW Wisconsin

After four months of intensive review and debate, the 15-member Wind Siting Council presented to the Public Service Commission (PSC) its final recommendations on the statewide permitting rule under development. The Council's report comes at a critical juncture; the PSC will issue a final rule on this proceeding before the end of August.

Officially organized in March, the Council is a diverse panel of citizens created under the new wind siting law (2009 Act 40) to consider specific ideas and proposals for improving the permitting climate in Wisconsin. Among the stakeholder groups represented on the Council are wind developers, uncompensated landowners living near wind turbines, local government officials, energy companies, realtors, environmental groups, and public health professionals.

RENEW Executive Director Michael Vickerman serves on the Wind Siting Council as a representative of an environmental group. RENEW President Jennifer Heinzen also serves as one of the Council's two public members.

In specifying such a diverse lineup, the Legislature's goal was clear: to forge a consensus proposal from the constituencies who have the most to gain from resolving long-standing differences. As stated in its report:

"The Council recognizes that a number of factors have created an extraordinarily hostile environment in Wisconsin, where each side in the debate seizes upon the slightest misstep or mistake of the other as ammunition in their regulatory, legislative, legal and public relations battles. If we are to

move beyond this divide and work together to truly balance competing policy priorities while supporting a reasonable expansion of wind energy in this state, we must move beyond this hand-to-hand combat posture."

At the urging of Chairman Dan Ebert, individual Council members made a significant effort to accommodate other viewpoints to reach the broadest possible area of agreement. As events unfolded, however, complete consensus proved elusive. Eleven of the 15 Council members voted in favor of the report and the recommendations contained therein. The four dissenting Council members signed on to a minority report that was attached to the Council's document.

The presence of the minority report obscures the broad agreement that was reached on such issues as complaint resolution, signal interference, decommissioning, emergency procedures, and construction and operating standards. The divergence of viewpoints tracks along the familiar hot button issues associated with wind energy development: sound emissions, shadow flicker, and property values.

### Performance-Based Standards

In sharp contrast to the approach taken by the PSC in the draft rule, the Council emphasized the adoption of performance-based standards for sound and shadow flicker, instead of a menu of specified setback distances, for regulating the placement of turbines from neighboring residences and occupied community structures. The only setback distances specified by the Council were those from property lines.

Though the Council concluded that

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the existing evidence did not warrant the establishment of property value protection plans as conditions on a permit, the prevailing sentiment was that wind developers needed to lessen the financial divisions between host property owners and neighboring residences. As stated in its report,

"[T]he Council concludes that developers should, as a standard practice, offer non-participating landowners a financial stake – a wind easement – in a project. Such offers give traditional 'nonparticipating' landowners an opportunity to 'participate' in a project and gain some control over developers' siting decisions."

During the Siting Council's deliberations, the PSC issued a draft rule in mid-

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### New RENEW Members

RENEW welcomes the following new businesses and individuals who joined since the last newsletter:

Advanced Custom Geothermal • Arctic Glass • Building Energy Controls  
Green Heron Resources • Stan Hamre  
Bob Heller • Paul LaVanway • Lisa Nelson • Northern Power Systems  
Orchid International • Michael Powers  
Prairie View Power • Hugh Schmidt  
SnugHouse Energy Audits • Springdale Farm • TJH Energy Consulting • Samuel Vainisi • Windustry

To join RENEW, complete and return the membership form on page 2.

## A summary comparison of key differences between the Wind Siting Council's final recommendations on a statewide siting rule with the draft rule (PSC 128) issued in May

Category	Siting Council	Draft Rule
<b>Large wind definition</b>	> 300 kW	< 100 kW
<b>Small wind definition</b>	300 kW maximum; turbines not to exceed 100 kW	100 kW maximum
<b>Community wind definition</b>	Up to 15 MW; local use or ownership requirements	> 300 kW
<b>Setback distances - large</b> From property line From neighboring residences	1.1 x total turbine heights - waivable None	Same 3.1 x total turbine height
<b>Setback distances - small</b> From property line From neighboring residences	1.0 x total turbine height- waivable None	1.1 x total turbine height - waivable 3.1 x total turbine height
<b>Sound limits</b>	50 dBa (day) 45 dBa (night, year-round)	50 dBa (day) 45 dBa (night, 4/1 - 9/30)
<b>Shadow flicker standard</b>	Not to exceed 40 hours/year	Not to exceed 30 hours/year
<b>Shadow flicker mitigation</b>	Mandatory about 20 hours/year	Mandatory about 25 hours/year
<b>Lease requirements/ prohibitions</b>	No	Yes
<b>Public notification requirement</b> Large wind Small wind	90 days before filing application 60 days before filing application	270 days before filing application 270 days before filing application
<b>Landowner notification requirement</b> Large wind Small wind	1 mile All adjacent landowners	1/2 mile 1/2 mile

**Yes.** I want to help RENEW shape a clean renewable energy future. Please accept my membership in the following category:

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RENEW Wisconsin, a nonprofit membership organization, advocates the adoption of sustainable energy strategies to power Wisconsin businesses and households in an environmentally responsible manner. Through a combination of public policy and private sector initiatives, RENEW aims to increase the use of clean, renewable, and locally available resources to produce thermal and electric energy.

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RENEW also moderates a blog at [www.renewwisconsinblog.org](http://www.renewwisconsinblog.org).

## Community Wind Finds Home in Cashton

by Michael Vickerman  
RENEW Wisconsin

What may become Wisconsin's first example of a Community Wind project cleared a significant hurdle in June when the Village of Cashton in Monroe County issued a permit to allow the construction of two Vestas V90 turbines, totaling 3.6 megawatts (MW), inside its business park.

As proposed, the turbines would be located in the Cashton Greens Business Park adjacent to the CROPP Cooperative distribution center facility. Though CROPP Cooperative (a/k/a Organic Valley) is one of the three project principals, the turbines will not be configured to feed power directly into the distribution center. Instead, they will connect to the substation constructed to serve the business park, which includes a few other businesses. The energy is delivered to the Village's municipal utility, Cashton Municipal Electric and Water Utility.

Like CROPP, the other partners in this venture, Gundersen Lutheran Health Systems and Western Technical College, are fixtures in western Wisconsin. Together, the project partners have been monitoring wind speeds in Cashton for over four years. Located on a high ridge near the village's southern boundary, the project site has elevations over 1,350 feet above sea level and is well exposed to prevailing winds.

As of press time, the three project principals were very close to signing a power purchase agreement (PPA) with an undisclosed utility. If a PPA is inked before Labor Day, project construction would commence this year, with completion expected in summer 2011.

In giving Cashton Greens the go-ahead to build, the Village became the first local government to approve a wind energy installation since the Town of Glenmore in Brown County did so in 2007. During that three-year drought, local jurisdictions kept wind development at bay, mostly by adopting ordinances

with onerous conditions designed to raise project costs and frustrate developers. As a result of these tactics, applications representing about 500 MW in new wind capacity remain in a state of suspended animation.

In reviewing Cashton Greens, the village relied upon Monroe County's existing wind ordinance when it considered setback distances, sound thresholds and limits to shadow flicker duration. The statewide wind permitting rules under development will not be applied retroactively to permitted projects like Cashton Greens.

The climate for pursuing Community Wind in Wisconsin may improve once the Public Service Commission (PSC) approves the statewide siting rule. The Wind Siting Council, a 15-member body advising the PSC on the rule's contents, has recommended the creation of a special category for Community Wind that would be subject to a less burdensome notification requirement than would a large wind energy system. The Council defines Community Wind as a wind energy generation facility that is locally owned or designed to meet local needs for electricity. The Council recommends capping Community Wind projects at 15 MW.

Under the Council's proposed definition, the Cashton Greens Wind Farm would have no difficulty qualifying as a Community Wind project. While there are several permitted prospects involving small clusters of wind turbines under 15 MW, none of them, except a three-turbine project in Westby, is either owned by local entities or is designed to serve the host community. Unfortunately, until a buyer is found for the higher-cost power associated with smaller projects, these prospects are unlikely to proceed to construction.

To help local residents visualize the installation and to explain their interest in pursuing this clean energy venture,

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## Renewables Profile

## Seventh Generation Pioneers Wind Projects in Wisconsin



*The staff of Seventh Gen (left to right): Jim Yockey, executive director; Alicia Leinberger, marketing; Dave Drapac, resource division manager; Andrew Herr, lead technician; Barb Schwarz, office manager; Nick Raaum, technician; Ry Thompson, systems division manager; Dave Kiedorwki, technician; Mike Kieraldo, met tower manager; Myron Tanner, site assessor.*

by Ed Blume  
RENEW Wisconsin

Unusual from its start as a not-for-profit in the business of renewable energy, Seventh Generation Energy Systems (commonly called Seventh Gen) continues to pioneer organizationally and technically with the addition of Jim Yockey, executive director, and Ry Thompson, project manager. Alicia Leinberger, one of the founders of Seventh Gen, oversees marketing and business development for the eight-year-old organization.

None of the three spring from especially technical backgrounds. Yockey (rhymes with hockey, as he says) earned a bachelor's in philosophy and religious studies from the University of California - Berkeley with an emphasis on environmental and cultural studies, which helps him understand closed-loop systems, like energy generation. A master's in anthropology and work on a Ph.D. gave him a more grounded understanding.

After arriving in Madison in 1987 and trying a few iterations of unsuc-

cessful business ventures, 48-year-old Yockey discovered entrepreneurial opportunities in energy consulting for businesses, municipalities, and Native American tribes.

Thompson, born of hippie parents in British Columbia but raised in Oklahoma, spent 15 years as an environmental planner in the Pacific Northwest, primarily focusing on salmon restoration, as well as lakes and watersheds in urban settings.

A friend from Evansville, WI, took him to the Energy Fair of the Midwest Renewable Energy Association where he found a good fit with renewable energy because he "liked to be around stuff."

In July of 2009, he leaped into his first Seventh Gen project with only ten days of training from Katie Ross, whom he replaced.

Leinberger also took an indirect path to renewable energy with a degree in ecology from the UW-Madison. She admits that she knew nothing technical and "didn't even know what a kilowatt-hour was."

In addition to installing solar

and wind systems, Seventh Gen's Resource Division installs wind measurement towers and then manages and analyzes the resulting data.

**Q.** *Why is the organization called Seventh Generation?*

**Alicia:** It's right there on our new Web site ([www.sges.us](http://www.sges.us)) from an Iroquois saying: "In every deliberation, we must consider the impacts of our decisions on the next seven generations."

**Q.** *Why was Seventh Gen formed as a not-for-profit?*

**Alicia:** We knew from the beginning that it would not likely be profitable. We emphasized education through implementation, so we spent a lot of time working with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association and presenting at workshops and conferences.

**Jim:** Our projects include a strong educational element, such as the Northwind turbine we installed at Wausau East High School. Loren Ebbecke, the school's terrific science teacher and a renewable energy enthusiast, spearheaded the project, and she'll be using real-time readouts in the classroom to teach her students.

Through education of young people, we're definitely passing the renewable energy commitment from generation to generation.

**Ry:** The name touches on my background too. Restoration of salmon habitat clearly included the Native American nations in Oregon, where I worked.

**Alicia:** And we are not that cleaning product company with a similar name.

**Q.** *Jim and Ry, being the new staff, have you discovered anything unusual about Seventh Gen or the renewable energy industry?*

**Jim:** I didn't know how young the Seventh Gen staff was, nor did I realize their high degree of technical competence.

I was surprised with the amount of renewable energy development in Wisconsin. Clearly, the market is driven by incentives offered first and foremost by Focus on Energy when coupled with incentives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and federal tax credits.

**Ry:** The dynamic nature of the industry. It's only 30 years old or so, and still immature. It's difficult to complete an installation seamlessly. It's sometimes not easy to order a part and get it when we need it. Many of the turbines aren't much beyond the prototype phase of development.

**Q.** *Seventh Gen recently installed the first Canadian-built Endurance turbine in the*

U.S. at the Prehn Cranberry Marsh near Tomah. Did that go smoothly?

**Ry:** After what I just said, it went smoothly, even though the turbine carried the serial number 1. It was the first turbine of that line ever made. This specific machine underwent five months of testing at the company's Quebec manufacturing facility.

The Endurance represents the pioneering going on in this new industry, and we've been eager to install one. It's a very well-designed, durable machine and the 30-foot-long blades make it suitable to lower wind speed environments, as are common in Wisconsin.

**Jim:** We're excited to be among the pioneers. As for another leading-edge project, Seventh Gen will soon install a two-blade, 11-kW Danish Gaia turbine. Worldwide Gaia has a few hundred installed, and it's been tested at NREL. With two blades, each about 21 feet long, the machine appears to be more efficient, and it uses less material, of course. We'll see how it performs with our relatively low wind speeds, exactly what it's designed to handle.

**Q.** *Do you see the business side of the wind industry as being as immature as the technology side.*

**Ry:** Oh, yes. We run into supply chain problems occasionally, when a supplier was there yesterday and it's bankrupt today.

**Jim:** Seventh Gen's business model is still evolving.

**Alicia:** The not-for-profit status provides advantages to Seventh Gen not available to for-profit businesses, and we just created a for-profit corporation called Seventh Generation Energy Services Integrated, a wholly owned subsidiary of the not-for-profit.

We split our two functions – edu-

cation for the not-for-profit and implementation for the for-profit, which takes its name from a wider mission to integrate different types of renewables to create resilient communities.

Seventh Gen Integrated Services will also pursue business opportunities in Iowa and Minnesota where the wind resource is a bit better than Wisconsin's.

**Q.** *With your perspective over the last eight years, Alicia, what do you think of the future for the renewable energy industry?*

**Alicia:** Unfortunately, fossil fuels are so heavily subsidized that we can't take care today of what we need to do for tomorrow. We recently met with some utility staff and tried to tell them that they know what the cost of coal is going to be in the future. They're just fooling themselves if they remain committed solely to coal.

It might be too late, but those of us here at Seventh Gen keep doing what we think is correct. Maybe seven generations from now people will look back and say we tried our best.

# Making Sense of the Gulf of Mexico Oil Disaster

by Michael Vickerman  
RENEW Wisconsin

About 100 people gathered in downtown Madison in early July to take part in “Hands Across the Sands,” an internationally organized protest against continued oil drilling in and along the world’s coastal waters. Against the backdrop of the weed-choked waters of Lake Monona, they joined hands for 15 minutes to express their fervent desire to see a cleaner, less destructive energy future emerge from the liquid melanoma spreading across the Gulf of Mexico.

No doubt the protestors would like to do more, much more, than simply engage in a ritualized protest in front of a few camera crews. But we live in a society that is organized around the expectation of a limitless supply of nonrenewable hydrocarbons feeding concentrated energy into our economic bloodstream. Most of us have not bothered to comprehend the yawning gulf that lies between our best intentions and our abject dependence on the wealth-producing properties of petroleum. Nor how this addiction fills us with delusions of god-like mastery over our environment while blinding us to the reality that we humans have grossly overshot our planet’s carrying capacity.

## The Ultimate Prize

For those who read and still remember the science fiction classic *Dune*, the “spice” on Arrakis remains the quintessential literary analogy to the reality of Earth’s oil. Like our oil, the spice held a special place in that world as the ultimate prize worth waging wars and plundering hostile environments for.

To carry the analogy further, if oil has become the spice, as it were, of America, then America has become our planet’s House of Harkonnen. Each great power has been willing to deploy their military supremacy to launch preemptive strikes on distant lands to assert control over the most valuable resource

in their domain. In *Dune*, the invasion of Arrakis began as a rout, but over time evolved into a wearying, treasury-sapping occupation that ultimately cost the House of Harkonnen its status as a great power. Sound familiar?

Extracting these highly prized resources is dangerous business. On Arrakis, careless spice miners wind up as snack food for giant sandworms coursing through the sands. On our fair planet, British Petroleum’s stumbling ways a mile below the sea surface let loose a lethal eruption and a tide of goo now washing over countless estuaries and coastal outposts dense with life.

Just as the universe in *Dune* revolves around the spice, petroleum sets the rhythms and beats that make up life in America. It powers our comings and goings, our getting and spending. It is the fuel that carries us and our possessions across continents and over oceans. It makes possible the transporting of lettuce grown in California to supermarkets in Florida, and enables an envelope picked up in Phoenix to be flown to Memphis and then to Seattle in under 24 hours.

In fact, petroleum is the fuel of fuels, powering diesel trains that pull 130 carfuls of Wyoming coal to electric generating stations in Wisconsin and Georgia. Diesel seems to be everywhere, in tankers carrying crude oil, in trucks hauling solar electric panels, and in cranes assembling 250-ton wind energy turbines.

## Oil-Powered Shrimp Boats

It’s worth mentioning that all the boats that gather shrimp and oysters from the Louisiana coastline are equipped with engines that run on diesel fuel. Gone are the days when baymen reached their favored fishing grounds using muscle power and wind energy. Without petroleum, shrimping ceases to be the industrial enterprise it is today.

But while diesel is ubiquitous, crude oil is not. The big, shallow reservoirs

have all been discovered and many of them are showing signs of exhaustion. But as long as the demand for petroleum remains at current levels, oil companies have no choice but to fan out to the most remote corners to find the next big strike. Yet because we have fashioned an economy that can’t operate “normally” without petroleum, it will be extremely challenging, if not downright impossible, to effect an organized program of reducing oil consumption through political channels. To the extent we’ll see any policy response to our energy predicament, it is highly unlikely that it will be anything more enlightened than what the House of Harkonnen cooked up under similar circumstances.

Americans from all walks of life believe that we can accomplish anything if we put our collective will and ingenuity to it. But invoking that appealing myth will not help us extricate ourselves from our present predicament. What we need instead is the capacity to envision a fulfilling and livable world without copious quantities of petroleum. Only then do we have a chance of breaking the spell that has put us in the thrall of this wondrous energy source.

Need I mention that once you begin to appreciate the finitude of the Earth’s endowment of petroleum, there’s nothing to stop you from taking immediate steps to curb your personal consumption of this irreplaceable fuel. Whatever you do to lessen your dependence on petroleum will turn out to be a much more satisfying and meaningful response to our energy predicament than any canned protest promoted through Facebook.

As for myself, I made two resolutions since the Macondo well erupted. The first is to go through this summer without activating the household air-conditioner. So far, so good, I can report. (Luckily, we were spared the triple-digit temperature swelterfest that gripped the East Coast last week). It

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# Two Turbines Power Cascade Wastewater Plant

by Michael Vickerman  
RENEW Wisconsin

With the start-up of two 100-kilowatt (kW) wind turbines, the Village of Cascade became the first Wisconsin community to power its municipal wastewater treatment plant with 100 percent locally produced wind energy.

The impetus behind Cascade's embrace of wind power was the avoided utility expenditures associated with operating a wastewater treatment plant. In the first year of operation, Cascade stands to save \$30,000.

With anticipated increases in electric rates, the Village of Cascade should save more than one million dollars over the thirty-year life of the turbines.

Additional revenue will come from the sale of excess power to We Energies.

"With these two turbines, the Village of Cascade has taken a giant step

toward energy independence," said Michael Vickerman. "Its prudent investment in wind energy will enable the community to control its energy budget, saving money for current and future residents."

Kettle View Renewable Energy, LLC, a wind system installer located in nearby Random Lake, installed and commissioned Cascade's turbines.

"We are proud that our local efforts on this project made this the first net-zero energy wastewater treatment plant in Wisconsin," said project manager Randy Faller. "It speaks volumes to the commitment by the Village of Cascade to generate clean, domestic energy while saving their community money."

These two turbines double the number of Northwind 100s in Wisconsin to four, all installed in the last 12 months. The first two installed turbines serve schools in Wausau and Fort Atkinson.

## Siting standards

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May, triggering a public comment period that ran until July 7, 2010 and included several public hearings held around the state. The summary table on page 2 highlights the specific provisions where the Siting Council's recommendations differ from the draft rule.

PSC staff will put the recommendations into appropriate language to then be considered by the commissioners

Once the PSC finalizes the rule, it will be sent to the Energy and Utilities Committees in the Assembly and Senate for their review and input. The final rule is likely to take effect this November.

The Wind Siting Council's recommendations are retrievable at <http://psc.wi.gov/mediaRoom/whatsnew.htm>. Documents associated with the wind siting rulemaking docket can be viewed at <http://psc.wi.gov>. The case number is 1-AC-231. ☼

## Making Sense of the Disaster

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wasn't that long ago that life without air-conditioning was the norm rather than the exception. If we all resolved not to turn on air-conditioners, we could force the retirement of two or three coal-fired plants in this state.

The other change was to ratchet up my reliance on my bicycle and make it the default vehicle for all my local travels, irrespective of weather conditions. I have been a fair-weather bicycle commuter for many years, but after watching everyone on TV blame someone else for the catastrophe, I felt the need to push myself a little harder. My objective here is to regard my car as a luxury that one day I might do without.

Though the extra perspiration and the occasional dodging of raindrops may take some getting used to, you are going to sleep better at night. Trust me on this. ☼

Northern Power Systems, the Vermont turbine manufacturer, "couldn't be more pleased that our technologically advanced, American-made Northwind 100 turbines are delivering real energy solutions for municipalities, schools, businesses and farms across Wisconsin," said Mr. Brett Pingree, Vice President of Americas at Northern Power Systems.

Grants from Milwaukee-based We Energies and Focus on Energy were instrumental in supplementing Cascade's investment in the project. ☼

## Cashton

(continued from page 3)

the Cashton Greens project principals organized an open house at the local community center on April 8. Residents flocked to the project engineer's display table and scrutinized the maps and simulated renderings of the turbines' appearance on the landscape. Wes Slaymaker of WES Engineering, served as the go-to person for technical information on sound emissions, shadow flicker and stray voltage. RENEW staff and members also took part in the event, both to provide the policy context for wind energy and to lend support to a precedent-setting initiative that would, if built set a high standard for future developments. ☼

### Cashton Greens Wind Farm At a Glance

Partners: CROPP Cooperative,  
Gundersen Lutheran Health  
Systems, Western Technical Col  
lege  
Engineer: WES Engineering Inc.  
(Madison)  
Total capacity: 3.6 MW  
Total height: 476 ft.  
Blade length: 164 ft.  
Est. cost: \$10 million  
Est. output: 11 million kwh/yr

# Renewable and Energy Efficiency Events

<b>Sept. 29, 2010</b>	<b>Solar Decade Conference, Milwaukee, WI.</b> A comprehensive solar energy educational opportunity for your home, business, and career. Sponsored by Focus on Energy, We Energies, and others. For details see <a href="http://www.solardecade.comea.org">www.solardecade.comea.org</a> .
<b>Sept. 30 - Oct. 1, 2010</b>	<b>Solar Thermal '10, Milwaukee, WI.</b> A national solar heating and cooling conference and expo for solar thermal professionals. For details see <a href="http://www.the-mrea.org">www.the-mrea.org</a> .
<b>October 2, 2010</b>	<b>Solar Tour of Homes and Businesses.</b> All across Wisconsin. Owners open their doors to let people see how renewable energy is practical, reliable, and affordable in today's economy. The homes and businesses often include other energy efficiency and renewable technologies. For details see <a href="http://www.the-mrea.org">www.the-mrea.org</a> .
<b>October 13, 2010</b>	<b>Wisconsin Wind Energy Supply Chain Workshop, Milwaukee, WI.</b> Learn how to join the wind energy supply chain from 1st tier and aftermarket manufacturers. For details see <a href="http://www.thenewnorth.com">www.thenewnorth.com</a> .
<b>Mar. 9 - 12, 2011</b>	<b>Green Energy Summit: The Green Frontier, Milwaukee, WI.</b> An acclaimed professional/academic conference featuring keynote speakers, workshops, demonstrations, and exhibits. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation and others. For details see <a href="http://www.greenenergysummit.us">www.greenenergysummit.us</a> .

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