

Small Wind Energy System Model Ordinance

— An Overview

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Small wind turbines are being installed to supply power to a variety of sites -- including farms, businesses and schools. A small-scale wind energy system can help make a home or business energy-independent. A grid-connected wind system provides the benefits of wind energy and the consistency of the utility. An off-grid system has no connection to utility lines, so it is very useful in isolated locations. Installing a wind turbine is a productive way of offsetting high utility costs while making a commitment to the community and the environment.

The most significant barrier to small wind turbine installation can be local zoning. This has been an incidental result of uncertainty about large wind farms by some communities. To help educate local officials, Focus on Energy and UW-Extension have developed a small wind energy system model ordinance for local towns and counties. The ordinance complies with the relevant state statute, WI s.s. 66.0401, governing a municipality's ability to regulate wind systems.

There are several ways a town or county can use the small wind energy system model ordinance. It can be adopted as-is, or it can be used as the basis for a conditional-use permit. For example, the Town of Ahnapee in Kewaunee County took out the standards, abandonment, and permit requirements sections and put them into a conditional-use permit. The Town of Merton in Waukesha County is doing the same thing. Alternatively, Calumet County adopted many of the recommendations in the small wind energy model ordinance and placed it into the overall county wind ordinance that also includes large wind.

For further assistance with small scale wind energy systems and issues, go to the Focus on Energy Web site at www.focusonenergy.com/renewableenergy or call 800 762-7077. With specific questions on zoning issues related to wind, contact Mick Sagrillo through Focus on Energy or directly at (920) 837-7523, msagrillo@itol.com.



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