

**Wind Power Task Force  
Meeting Summary  
July 20, 2007**

- I. Alec Giffen welcomed the Task Force, and Task Force members introduced themselves. Mr. Giffen summarized the group's charge from the Governor, as spelled out in the Executive Order creating the Task Force. Karin Tilberg from the Governor's Office indicated she would be also attending Task Force meetings.

Mr. Giffen handed out two documents to help organize the Task Force:

- A list of mutual understandings to help with the Task Force process; and
- A draft work plan

Mr. Giffen requested that the Task Force provide their comments on these documents.

In response to a question from Representative MacDonald, Mr. Giffen clarified that the Task Force is to report its recommendations, which could include proposed legislation, to the Governor by January 15, 2008.

- II. Todd Burrowes presented an overview of the working draft of briefing materials compiled for the Task Force. The materials include overview information on various aspects of wind power, including current technology, environmental issues, infrastructure, and financial incentives. These materials will be made available on-line at a website set up for the project - [www.maine.gov/windpower](http://www.maine.gov/windpower).

The Task Force identified background information and issues that should be addressed as the group begins its deliberations, including:

- Information related to wildlife impacts;
- Economic effects of adding about 1000 MW of new wind power in Maine;
- The regional energy infrastructure , to help provide context for the discussion;
- Energy tax credits; and
- The "big picture" of the energy needs of the State

Alec Giffen indicated that as a next step in the process this list of issues will be further refined and related information needs and sources identified. A draft list of speakers will be circulated to solicit Task Force members' suggestions.

Mr. Giffen circulated a draft questionnaire to tabulate Task Force members' thoughts on wind power development. Comments on the questionnaire will be accepted for the next week, and then the questionnaire will be distributed.

Tentative plans for the next meeting (on August 3) are to hold a site visit at the Mars Hill wind power project, and then have a Task Force meeting on the afternoon of the

same day. Commissioner Littell offered an alternative date in September—when he will be at the Mars Hill site—for those who can't make August 3.

### **III. Presentations**

A. Jim Keil of Stantec, an international design and consulting firm, presented an overview of wind power issues, including new technologies operating elsewhere, such those involving pump storage, which he suggested as a means to address variability inherent in wind power production. Mr. Keil suggested that the Task Force set a goal for how much of the State's electric power production should come from wind (and other renewables) and let this policy guide siting decisions, while recognizing the need for project-specific review of potential impacts.

B. Suzanne Sayer, an engineer from Kittery, presented information an overview of global warming and potential environmental issues. Ms. Sayer's remarks emphasized the practical and ethical need to ensure use of renewable energy sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address global climate change concerns. In response to a question by Mr. Littell, Ms. Sayer clarified that the species extinction studies she referenced in her comments did not specifically isolate climate change, as opposed to other factors, as a cause.

C. Steve Clarke of the Appalachian Trail Club, whose interests are focused on the Trail (AT), emphasized the need to translate estimates of wind power potential in Maine into the amount of land used by projects generating that power. Mr. Clarke noted that Maine PUC has estimated that 1000 MW of wind power is reasonably feasible in Maine, while the National Renewable Energy Laboratory has estimated about 2000MW may be developable in the foreseeable future. Mr. Clarke, noting his organization's recognition of Maine's need to adapt and develop wind power, emphasized that wind power development must not be done in ways that sacrifice the character of Maine's special places. Using an average 28% capacity factor (the percentage of a turbine's total nameplate capacity that's actually produced) which he indicated came from the USDOE, Mr. Clarke suggested that, as a rough estimate, wind projects may produce about 1MW of power per tower. This calculation, he asserted, suggests that an estimated 1000 wind towers and associated land development would be needed to reach PUC's 1000 MW estimate (2000 to reach NREL's). Mr. Clarke urged the Task Force to consider the implications for the character of Maine of industrial development on that scale. In response to questions from the Task Force, Mr. Clarke clarified that his organization considers visual impacts in terms of a project's proximity to the AT and understands that anticipated technological advances may make wind power economic in additional areas with slower wind speeds.

### **IV. Public Comments**

A. Richard Jennings asked the Task Force to distinguish carefully between facts and emotions regarding wind power development's effects as it conducts its study. A

retired psychiatrist, Mr. Jennings observed that emotion and denial often unduly affect decision-making, albeit unintentionally.

B. Wendy Todd discussed noise, strobe, flicker, and safety issues of the wind power project in Mars Hill, and asked the Task Force to look to other places (California, other countries) to see how these issues have been addressed. Mrs. Todd indicated that a noise study on the Mars Hill project was recently submitted to DEP and will inform next steps in addressing issues with that facility. Mrs. Todd related that she felt residents were misled regarding the project's impacts on local residents and that its impacts, identified above, have significantly and adversely affected their quality of life by causing sleep disruption, nausea, disorientation, and other related adverse effects.

C. Gore Flynn, referencing his professional work as a wind power consultant, commented that developing wind power at a community-scale will be challenging. Mr. Flynn emphasized that the Task Force should consider wind power development from a regional perspective (including the 1600 MWs proposed in New Brunswick) to get an overall picture, which should include transmission issues such as the bottleneck at the New Hampshire border. Mr. Flynn emphasized that the Task Force should examine the effects of federal tax credits, since in his estimation current federal tax credits are enabling wind to be developed at less than optimal sites.

D. Having conducted viewshed analyses using GIS technology as part of his work as a student at Tufts University, Greg Haring said that if a project is located on flat land, there is a need to assess the shielding effect of existing vegetation when considering visual impacts.

In response to a question asking if noise issues at the Mars Hill project are anomalous, Commissioner Littell indicated that that DEP is reviewing the recently submitted noise report on Mars Hill to assess those issues.

Task Force member Juliet Browne said that the Task Force should receive information from a noise expert as an aid to its deliberations. Task Force member Senator Gooley said that a presentation on noise issues should address decibel levels, range and duration.

E. Dean Trafton indicated that noise conflicts with wind facilities are common around the world. Mr. Trafton commented that wind power is a type of industrial development the primary motivation for which is profit. Mr. Trafton said that threats from wind power facilities include community issues (such as setbacks, flicker, and noise). Mr. Trafton emphasized that the State needs to address these threats and ensure proper control of this form of industrial development in order to avoid adverse impacts to important wilderness, quality of place, natural beauty and other important attributes of Maine. In response to a question from Commissioner Littell, Mr. Trafton noted that siting guidance from the Task Force would be helpful.

F. Bob Weingarten, a spokesman for Friends of the Boundary Mountains, stated that the Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) has already made a decision, well-established in its comprehensive plan and zoning, that areas above 2,700 feet should be protected from development. Mr. Weingarten suggested that the Maine Rivers Policy provides a model for exploring how to accommodate wind power development by identifying areas on and off limits to development and thus rationalizing the regulatory system. Mr. Weingarten expressed frustration at the limited extent to which LURC has consulted with his organization to discuss its concerns.

G. Steve Bennett, a resident of Freedom, cited the “failed process” by which the town of Freedom has considered proposed wind power development there as his main concern. Mr. Bennett also said that “where” wind facilities occur is the point of the Task Force. Mr. Bennett suggested that the proximity of the facility proposed in Freedom to a state-significant bird rehabilitation facility raises issues of concern.

V. Based on the public comments and Task Force input, the attached table was developed to provide a preliminary list of issues for the Task Force. [See attachment]