
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Environment

BEAR MOUNTAIN WIND PROJECT APPROVED

VICTORIA – Bear Mountain Wind Limited Partnership (the proponent) – a partnership between Victoria-based Aeolis Wind Power Corporation, Alberta-based AltaGas Income Trust, and Dawson Creek-based Peace Energy Cooperative – has received an environmental assessment (EA) certificate for construction and operation of a new 120-megawatt wind power project located 16 km southwest of the City of Dawson Creek in the Peace River Regional District.

Environment Minister Barry Penner and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Minister Richard Neufeld made their decision to grant the EA certificate after considering the details of a comprehensive review led by B.C.'s Environmental Assessment Office (EAO).

The project consists of up to 57 wind turbine generators on the Bear Mountain ridge top, new access and maintenance roads, an underground medium-voltage electrical network connecting the turbines to the substation, a substation with staging area, an overhead 138-kV transmission line connecting the project to the BC Hydro grid, on-site public signage, and off-site interpretive and operations centres in the City of Dawson Creek.

The project originally included up to 60 wind turbine generators, but the proponent advised the EAO during the application review that the three northernmost turbines had been removed from the proposed layout in order to ensure compliance with the British Columbia Crown Land Use Operational Policy for Wind Power Projects.

If completed, the project will help reduce British Columbia's reliance on imported electricity, without producing greenhouse gas emissions, by generating enough electricity in an average year to meet the needs of 38,000 homes. The project was awarded a BC Hydro Electricity Purchase Agreement in 2006, and the proponent plans to begin commercial production of electricity in 2009.

The EAO Assessment Report concludes that effects from the project will be within acceptable levels, subject to adherence to the application's design components and implementation of mitigation measures and commitments agreed to by the proponent.

A federal environmental assessment review of this project has recently been triggered as a result of the proponent's application for federal financial assistance. The federal process is now underway and a decision is expected in the near future.

Before the project can proceed, the proponent will need to obtain the necessary provincial licences, leases and other approvals.

The provincial environmental assessment certificate contains 44 commitments that the proponent must implement throughout the various phases of the project. Some key commitments include:

- Abiding by all applicable provincial regulatory policies, including the wind turbine generator sound policy contained in the British Columbia Crown Land Use Operational Policy for Wind Power Projects (May 2007).
- Implementing a raptor, migratory bird and bat monitoring and follow-up program to mitigate bird and bat turbine collision and mortality.
- Establishing a technical advisory committee to further define and implement the Raptor and Migratory Bird and Bat Monitoring and Follow-up Programme via an on-site Qualified Environmental Professional.
- Providing advance notification to local residents of Bear Mountain prior to any project-related interference (e.g., traffic changes, construction).
- Maintaining a community feedback mechanism in Dawson Creek to ensure the public has access to publicly available project information and a way to have project-related issues addressed or resolved.

The project's capital costs are approximately \$240 million and it is expected to create between 60 and 120 jobs during construction and six permanent positions during its operational life of 25 years. It is estimated that the project will inject up to \$9 million in tax benefits to the Peace River Regional District over the life of the project.

More information on the environmental assessment certificate can be found at www.eao.gov.bc.ca.

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