
5.0 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

The proposed Project will require the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of certain human, material, environmental, and financial resources as described below. The commitment of these resources will be offset by the benefits that will result from implementation of the Project.

Human and financial resources have already been expended by the Applicant, the State of New York (i.e., various state agencies), Franklin County, and the towns of Bellmont and Chateaugay for the planning and review of the Project. The expenditure of funds and human resources will continue to be required throughout the permitting and construction phases of the Project (e.g., for environmental reviews and permitting, site plan approval, and building and construction inspections). The Applicant has entered into an agreement with the towns of Bellmont and Chateaugay to cover the third-party costs incurred by the towns in their capacity as Co-Lead Agents in the SEQRA review of the Project. Therefore, limited local investment of governmental economic resources will be required to complete the review of the Project, and these resources would be regained exponentially in economic benefits to local government should the proposed Project be approved and implemented.

The Project also represents a commitment of land for the life of the Project. Specifically, approximate 400 acres of land developed for wind turbine tower locations, access roads, and substations would not be available for alternative purposes for the life of the Project. However, because the turbines/towers would be removed at the end of their useful life, and the land may be reclaimed for alternative uses at some future date in accordance with the decommissioning plan, the commitment of this land to the Project would be neither irreversible nor irretrievable. It is possible that after 20 years, the wind turbines can be repowered with newer, more powerful and even more efficient wind turbines. This is a common occurrence in places like California where first-generation turbines have been repowered (replaced) with modern multi-megawatt wind turbines. Such activities fall outside the scope of this review and would in any case only prolong the use of land for a finite period of time.

During the life of the Project, surface drainage patterns may be altered because of the presence of the impervious surfaces associated with the Project. The Applicant would attempt to restore the ground surface to pre-existing grade to the best of their ability through the Project restoration plan. Temporary loss of habitat could result in a relocation of plants and animals that could be different than their pre-existing location and concentration. Any wildlife takes or kills would be minimized to the fullest extent, but some are still expected and would only be recovered through continued breeding of the species.

Various types of construction materials and building supplies would be committed to the Project. The use of these materials, such as gravel, concrete, steel, etc., would represent a long-term commitment of these resources, which would not be available for other projects. Some of these

materials may be reusable and recycled after Project decommissioning at the end of the Project's useful life; however, much of the concrete foundations will not be recycled, but will be left in place below three feet. Experience with other, older wind power projects demonstrates that older wind turbines are used for their scrap value in steel, copper, and aluminum, etc. and the projects are re-fitted with newer wind turbines.

Energy resources also would be irretrievably committed to the Project, during both the construction and operation of the Project. Fuel, lubricants, and electricity would be required during site preparation and turbine construction activities for the operation of various types of construction equipment and vehicles, and for the transportation of workers and materials to the Project Site. However, the energy resources used to construct and operate the Project would be minor compared to the clean, renewable energy generated by the Project and made available to the people of New York State.