

Frequently Asked Questions About Wind Energy



What is a wind turbine?

A wind turbine converts the power of the wind into electricity for use by homes and businesses.

How big is the wind turbine?

The typical tower of a wind turbine is 80 meters (262 ft.) high. The blades that catch the wind are typically 35-50 meters (115-165 ft.) long.

Are wind turbines noisy?

No. You can hold a conversation at the base of an operating turbine without any trouble; and at a distance of 1,000 feet, the noise level from an operating turbine is similar to that from a typical refrigerator in your kitchen.

Do wind turbines affect wildlife?

Most wildlife is not affected by windfarms. Birds and bats occasionally collide with wind turbines, as they do with other tall structures such as houses, radio and TV antennae, and power lines. We conduct studies prior to constructing a wind farm to ensure the project does not negatively impact wildlife. These impacts are generally low and not considered a major concern.

Can I still hunt on my property?

Yes. Hunting can usually continue on the property near the wind turbines. In order to protect the safety of the wind farm employees, we may need to restrict hunting in particular areas during specific times of the year.

What kind of tax revenue do wind farms provide?

A 100 MW facility (50-70 turbines) will comprise over \$200 million in investment. These improvements will normally provide significant tax revenue for rural communities. Often, these revenues serve to lower property tax rates for other residences and commercial properties.

Will my property tax increase?

Any property taxes on the wind farm itself will be paid by the owner of the wind farm. In most cases, however, the Tax Assessor bills us separately for the taxes attributed to the facility. If this is not the case, we will work out an agreement where we pay the wind farm taxes directly so the burden does not pass to the landowners.

Is wind energy cost effective?

Yes. To run a conventional power generation facility, the operator must purchase fuel at varying prices, creating volatility in the cost of energy produced by that facility. In areas with a robust wind resource, wind-generated electricity is very competitive with, and sometimes less expensive than, conventional generation sources such as natural gas.

How much land does a wind farm require?

On average, approximately 1-2 acres of land will be taken out of production for every turbine. This includes the turbine pad, the road going up to the turbine, and any ancillary facilities necessary for the turbine's operation. The rest of the land can continue to be used for any purpose that doesn't interfere with the wind power facility, such as farming and grazing.

How long is the useful life of the wind farm and what happens after the wind farm has reached its useful life?

A typical wind farm's useful life is 30 years. When a facility is no longer operating, it is the project owner's responsibility to remove the facility. This consists of removing all improvements made on the property to 3 feet below the surface. Additionally, the land will be restored as closely as feasible to its original condition.

Will I still be able to use my property for farming or ranching?

Yes. A typical wind farm takes less than 1-2% of the land out of production.

Do wind turbines affect property prices?

There is no credible evidence showing that wind farms negatively impact property values. Agricultural property values are normally based upon the income produced on the property. Because a wind turbine on your property will dramatically increase the income produced on it, a wind turbine should actually have a positive impact on the value of the property. Every independent study of this issue has found that wind turbines do not reduce property values and in fact, sometimes increase them.