

Swanton Wind LLC

P.O. Box 385
St. Albans, VT 05481

To: Town Planning Commissions
Town Select Boards
Northwest Regional Planning Commission
Adjoining Landowners

Date: August 24, 2015

Re: Swanton Wind Section 248 45-Day Pre-Filing Notice

My name is Travis Belisle, and my family and I are proud to inform you that our company, Swanton Wind LLC, will request approval in early October from the Vermont Public Service Board to build and operate a wind-powered electric generating facility on a windy, mile-long, flat hilltop located just east of Rocky Ridge Road and Route 105. The hilltop is located behind the home I share with my wife, Ashely, a local realtor, and is part of the ±250 acres owned and used by my family for logging, sugaring, and recreation for many, many years.



My Dad (Gerald), me and Ashley behind our Swanton homes down the hill from the site of the wind project.

Swanton Wind is my latest effort to develop locally-sourced renewable energy to replace fossil fuel use in the state. My first project was producing biodiesel from deep fryer waste oil, and using the biofuel for trucks and heavy equipment in our family's lumber supply business. Using our land to provide a source of local, clean, and stably-priced wind power to meet the needs of approximately 7,800 Vermont households is good for the Town of Swanton and is good for Vermont.

Swanton Wind will contribute significant tax revenues to Swanton and the state when it is operational. Payments to the Town of Swanton are estimated to be approximately \$3.7 million over the life of the project, with another approximately \$3 million to the statewide education fund. The project will create jobs, particularly during construction, and will help the State of Vermont reduce its greenhouse gas footprint and meet the new renewable energy standards that went into effect this past July. What's more, Swanton Wind can serve as a clean energy classroom for students in Swanton and the surrounding communities.

To help assess benefits and concerns of the project, we're working with an experienced team of experts. Impact analyses are ongoing, but we've gained enough information from

the assessments to date to provide a project plan that will continue to be refined for submittal to the Vermont Public Service Board on or after October 8, 2015.

This letter provides information about our plans in advance of our petition with the Public Service Board for a certificate of public good under 30 V.S.A. § 248. Enclosed you will find a Project Site Plan (Attachment 1), a United States Geological Survey (USGS) Map (Attachment 2), a basic diagram of a typical wind turbine (Attachment 3), and the current Swanton Wind Project Fact Sheet, dated August 2015 (Attachment 4), which includes a photographic simulation of up to seven wind turbines for the project. A glossary of key technical and other wind-specific terms is at the end of this letter for your convenience.

Project Team

I am a life-long Vermont resident, and founder and owner of Rocky Ridge Construction, LLC, a Swanton-based excavation and construction company. I've worked on many projects throughout northwestern Vermont and I know how important it is to engage the right experts. My father and I are founders and owners of Swanton Wind LLC, a Vermont limited liability company formed for this project.

Swanton Wind has assembled an experienced team of local and regional experts. Whenever possible, we have hired Vermont-based firms who understand the questions and concerns raised about wind projects.

Leading the team is Vermont Environmental Research Associates, Inc. or "VERA", a Waterbury-based firm that is managing the project and guiding its development. VERA has, for more than thirty years, helped the region transition to a cleaner and more secure energy future by providing services to wind companies, utilities, state agencies and private landowners to develop and commission renewable energy facilities. VERA's team has played a significant role in developing four of the five permitted wind facilities in Vermont, including Georgia Mountain Community Wind in Milton/Georgia, for which they continue as Project Manager.

The Swanton Wind team also includes the following New England-based organizations:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Krebs & Lansing Consulting Engineers Colchester, VT | Designing on-site road improvements and stormwater management to protect wetlands, vernal pools, and downstream water quality |
| Landworks Middlebury, VT | Assessing the aesthetic effects of the project on the surrounding landscape and its consistency with town and regional plans |
| Legal Counselors & Advocates, PLC Castleton, VT | Representing Swanton Wind at the Vermont Public Service Board in the Certificate of Public Good review process and other related permitting processes |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Northeast Archaeology Research Center Farmington, ME | Evaluating the potential effect if archeological resources are on site |
| Northern Economic Consulting, Inc. Isle La Motte, VT | Analyzing the economic benefit to the region, the state and its residents |
| Resource Systems Group, Inc. White River Junction, VT | Studying existing ambient sound conditions around the project area, modeling project sound profiles, and will monitor operational sounds to ensure compliance with public health standards |
| Stantec Consulting Services South Burlington, VT | Studying local and migratory populations of birds and bats to assess potential and impacts |

Project Description and Construction Plans

The project will be located along a ±1 mile section of hilltop, approximately 900 feet above sea level on a portion of our ±250 acres in Swanton and a portion of our neighbor and participating private landowner’s land to the north. As I mentioned, the hilltop and surrounding area where the project is proposed is very much a working landscape. Historically, these lands have been used for logging. Much of it is currently used for large maple sugaring operations, and includes roads to access approximately 12,000 taps.

The enclosed Project Site Plan shows our preferred locations for the main components of the project described below. The enclosed USGS map also identifies the location of project components in relation to the surrounding area.

The project will be accessed via Sheldon Road (State Route 105) in Swanton at Rocky Ridge Road, a private road. It will interconnect electrically with the existing Green Mountain Power 34.5 kV transmission line that runs parallel to and east of Sheldon Road. The point of interconnection will be at an existing utility pole where the 34.5kV line crosses Rocky Ridge Road. Neighbor input on the preferred location of the project electric line and related interconnection facilities along Rocky Ridge Road will be reflected in design modifications as we work with Green Mountain Power to ensure that the neighbors’ requests are incorporated into the interconnection plans.

A small structure may be installed to house SCADA equipment in the general vicinity of our sugarcane at the base of the hill. The dimensions and exact placement of the structure will be determined in consultation with the selected wind turbine vendor.

My team has and will continue to consult with state agencies and other stakeholders to assess project design alternatives that can continue to avoid and minimize potential negative impacts.

Wind Turbines

The wind turbine models under consideration for our project have three main components: a three-bladed rotor, a nacelle, and the supporting tower. The kinetic energy in the wind turns the three blades attached to the rotor. The resulting mechanical power turns the generator to create electricity. The nacelle houses most of the moving parts, sits atop the tower and functions to "yaw" or face into the wind.



An example of the working landscape on our hill

The wind turbine towers will be a neutral, off-white color which softens their visual prominence on the horizon and will provide protection from the elements for electrical and communication cables and operational computer equipment, as well as safe access for service personnel. Being enclosed, it also prevents birds and raptors from nesting or perching on the turbine. Typical wind turbine components are labeled on the wind turbine diagram included with this package. As approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the wind turbines selected for this project will be up to 499 feet high when a blade is in its highest position. Some of the wind turbines will have FAA-regulated lighting on top of the nacelle (similar to what is seen at Georgia Mountain Community Wind).

The wind turbine model selected for the project will have a 2 to 3 megawatt (MW) generator. Given the range of electrical ratings of turbine models being considered and the physical space available along the hilltop, we anticipate a total installed electric capacity of up to 20 MW. The specific wind turbine quantity and manufacturer will be selected closer to the construction period, after a formal wind turbine solicitation process is completed. For our impact analyses, we have modeled up to seven wind turbines (conservatively estimating the largest possible "footprint" for the project).

Access Road

The wind turbines will be accessed via 2.5± miles of new and upgraded road. In Swanton, from State Route 105 at Rocky Ridge Road (a private road) access to the hilltop will proceed by my existing logging road that extends from the eastern edge of Rocky Ridge Road to the top of the 900-foot hilltop.

The existing logging road will be upgraded and a new road built to accommodate the heavy and oversize construction loads. During installation of the wind turbines and related infrastructure, we are planning for a road of approximately 20 feet in width travelling up to the wind turbines, and approximately 35 feet in width travelling between the turbines (to enable installation cranes to move between turbine base areas and raise the wind turbine components). After installation, the road will be top-dressed, narrowed and returned to typical road width.

Electrical Collection System

A new 34.5 kilovolt (kV) electric collection line will carry power generated from the wind turbines to an interconnection point where Green Mountain Power's existing 34.5 kV transmission line currently crosses Rocky Ridge Road. The proposed interconnection location is shown on the attached Site Plan. We will install the electric collection line underground between the wind turbines, and overhead on single poles downhill along the access road to connect with GMP's existing transmission line. Safety equipment (enabling the project to be switched off at any time as necessary) will be installed at the point of interconnection.

We have submitted an interconnection request to ISO New England and Green Mountain Power (GMP) to evaluate and assure electric grid reliability and stability and to identify needed upgrades or modifications to safely interconnect the project. We expect the interconnection studies to be completed shortly after submittal of our Section 248 petition to the Public Service Board.

Transportation

While most construction materials are expected to be available within the project site, additional necessary site construction materials will be sourced locally whenever possible. These road and turbine foundation materials would use standard trucks for delivery to the site. Vehicles will utilize the state and local roads in the area in accordance with state and local regulations.

The largest wind turbine components, namely tower sections, blades, hubs and nacelles will require special handling and transport vehicles from the manufacturing facilities to the project site. Transportation regulations regulate oversize/overweight loads and will require the wind turbine components to be shipped with special permits to travel over Vermont's roads. Specific transportation plans will be coordinated with town, county and state transportation officials and will be approved by the Public Service Board.

Aesthetics



Conceptual illustration of typical size and placement of wind turbines along the hilltop (exact size and number to be determined).

Landworks of Middlebury, Vermont is conducting an aesthetic assessment of the project, which will consider the potential visual impact from the project and associated interconnection facilities, and identify measures that could be taken to soften any such impact. The assessment follows the parameters established by the Public Service Board for energy generation projects using the "Quechee" analysis. Particular to wind energy generation, the aesthetic assessment will consider potential visual impact at least ten miles from the project location. This review will consist of over 300 square miles and 13 towns. Although the project will be visible from some areas, view of the project will not be dominant or out of scale. The development of locally-generated power from a working landscape environment is within the tradition of the surrounding area, which includes a hydropower project, traditional agriculture, maple sugaring operations and the harvesting of forest resources.

Project Benefits

It is anticipated that the project's energy and capacity will go to Vermont electric distribution utilities under a long-term, fixed-price contract. The contract will be at avoided-cost rates approved by the Public Service Board in February 2015. I believe that the project represents an attractive resource for Vermont utilities in light of the state's and the region's renewable energy and sustainability goals. Notably, Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan, which is currently being updated, sets a goal of having 90% of total energy from renewable sources by 2050. Two of the four overarching goals of the updated Plan are to:

- Support in-state energy solutions, and
- Strive for a lower greenhouse gas emissions footprint.

Our Swanton Wind project will help the state to meet both of these goals. In addition, Swanton Wind will help to fill the void left by the retirement of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant at the end of 2014, a loss of 55% of Vermont's electric generating capacity. The Department of Public Service calculates that, as of today, the supply for about one-third of Vermont's electricity needs for 2020 and beyond have not been determined. Our project can be a part of the answer to Vermont's future electricity generation needs.

Most important are the benefits from avoiding energy made from polluting fossil fuel-fired electric generation plants, which also helps to minimize acid rain, ozone depletion, dirty-air related health problems, and climate change. We expect that the project will reduce

commissions to file revised recommendations with the Public Service Board.

For additional information about the project, please visit our website at <http://www.swantonwindvt.com>. Additional information about the Public Service Board Section 248 process, including how to participate in the Board's proceedings, can be found in the "Guide to the Vermont Public Service Board's Section 248 Process" at <http://psb.vermont.gov/>. The Guide may be outdated as a new state law, Act 56, now enables the Town of Swanton to participate as a formal party in the Board proceeding without the need file a motion to intervene. We look forward to the Town's participation in this process.

We hope that you will provide comments, share information and ask questions early and often so that we can evaluate and incorporate your suggestions and ideas into the overall planning and design process. As the project is still in the design phase, we will continue discussions and welcome feedback on this project from your representatives, as well as various key stakeholders.

If you are interested in a presentation on the project, or have comments or request further information, please contact Martha Staskus at VERA at (802) 244-7522 ext. 3#, or via e-mail at mstaskus@verarenewables.com.

Thank you for your participation in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Travis Belisle', written in a cursive style.

Travis Belisle for the Belisle Family

Enclosures

Glossary

- **Capacity (vs electricity):** The maximum amount of power an electric generator can produce, typically provided in Megawatts.
- **Comprehensive Energy Plan:** The Comprehensive Energy Plan (CEP) addresses Vermont's energy future for electricity, thermal energy (heating), transportation, and land use.
- **Electric Collection Line:** The electrical line that connects an electric generating plant to the electrical network of an electric distribution or transmission utility.
- **Electric Distribution Line:** An electrical line that carries power from an electric utility substation to retail electric customers.
- **Electric Generator:** The component of the wind turbine that converts the energy extracted from the spinning rotor blades into electricity.
- **Hub:** The center component of the wind turbine rotor where each of the three blades is mounted.
- **ISO New England:** Independent System Operator of New England. The entity responsible for management of the New England regional power grid.
- **Kilovolt (kV):** A unit of the electrical force or push across a wire or electric line.
- **Megawatt (MW):** a unit of electrical power equal to one million watts; a measure of the output of a power station. One Megawatt of power can light ten thousand 100W lightbulbs.
- **Nacelle:** The component of the wind turbine that sits atop the tower, houses most of the moving parts, and functions to yaw or face the wind turbine rotor into the wind.
- **Name Plate Electrical Rating:** The rated capacity of an electric generator.
- **Rotor:** The part of the turbine which rotates. The rotor of a conventional wind turbine consists of three blades and a hub.
- **Safety equipment (protection equipment, switchgear and/or electrical disconnect):** Electrical switches, fuses and devices that enable an electric generator(s) to be disconnected from the electric grid thereby protecting it and the grid from equipment malfunction.
- **Tower:** The wind turbine support for the nacelle and rotor.
- **Transformer:** An electrical component that converts the incoming electrical voltage to a higher or lower output voltage.
- **Transmission Line:** High voltage electrical line that carries electricity across the region from large generators to substations.
- **Viewshed:** The surrounding land area from which a structure or object is visible.

- **Wind Turbine:** A generator and supporting components that converts the kinetic energy of the wind to electric energy. The main components of a conventional wind turbine are the three blades, hub, generator, nacelle, and tower.
- **Yaw:** To turn by angular motion around a vertical axis.

ATTACHMENT 3

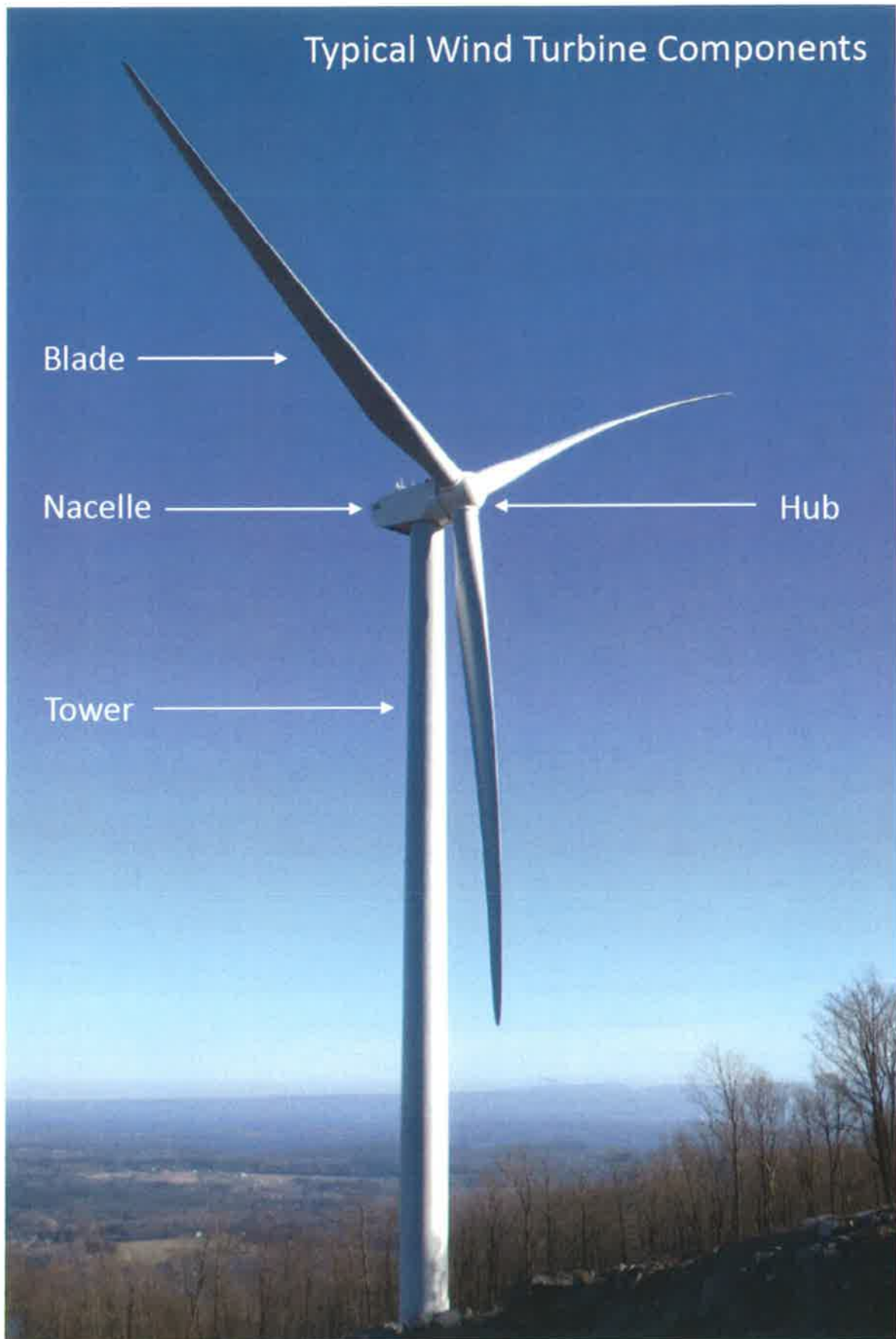




Figure 1: Conceptual illustration of typical size and placement of wind turbines along the hill top (exact size and number yet to be determined)

WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

Swanton Wind is an up to 20-megawatt clean energy generation project under development by a local family. It has the potential to provide enough power to meet the average annual electric needs of approximately 7,800 Vermont households. With up to 7 wind turbines, Swanton Wind will play a significant role in helping Vermont achieve its renewable energy goals with **stably-priced, locally-produced, zero-emission power**. The project site is a windy ± 1 mile long hilltop in the southeastern portion of Swanton, Vermont approximately 3 miles northeast of the City of St. Albans. It is a **working landscape** with existing roads to service the family's 12,000 tap maple sugaring operation and ongoing logging activities. Electricity from Swanton Wind will go to Green Mountain Power's existing distribution line along Sheldon Road (Rt. 105).

WHO IS PROPOSING SWANTON WIND?

The **Belisle Family**, including Travis and his father Gerald, have deep roots in the Swanton community. They are proposing the project on the ridge behind their own homes. Travis Belisle is the founder and owner of Rocky Ridge Construction, a local excavation and construction company that focuses on building new affordable homes in northwestern Vermont. Gerry Belisle, is an original founder of the Vermont-based hardware and home supply stores, Sticks 'n Stuff. As life-long Vermonters, the Belisle Family firmly believes in the environmental and economic benefits of wind power. With the goal of sharing these benefits

with the local communities, the Belisle Family has assembled a team of Vermont resource specialists and project managers to assist in bringing the project to fruition. These include the renewable energy project specialists at Vermont Environmental Research Associates of Waterbury, ecological scientists from Arrowwood Environmental of Huntington, and Resource Systems Group of White River Junction and the civil engineering firm Krebs & Lansing of Colchester, among others.

"I want to make a difference for my community. I want to make a difference for this Earth." Travis Belisle

Wind resource and environmental assessments performed to date suggest that wind turbines operating at the Swanton site can contribute a substantial amount of clean, economical electric energy to our Vermont power system.

WHAT PERMITS ARE REQUIRED?

Swanton Wind will need the approval of the Vermont Public Service Board. Before approving the project, the Board will conduct a public hearing in the local community and consider information presented by all interested parties. The Board must find that the project will serve the public good, will provide economic benefits to the state and will not have an undue adverse effect on our natural environment, aesthetics, historic sites, or public health and safety, transportations systems and other public interests. In

addition to this process, specific permits will be obtained through several agencies including the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, which is charged with protecting clean water and wildlife habitat, the Vermont Agency of Transportation, and the regional electric grid operator ISO New England.

WHY DEVELOP WIND POWER HERE? WHY NOW?

New, local sources of clean electricity are needed to meet increasing demand for new sources of electricity and to replace retiring nuclear and fossil fuel-fired energy plants. Wind is an inexhaustible local fuel resource that provides long-term price stability because it has no fuel costs. This benefits the entire region by making electricity prices less dependent on volatile fossil fuel markets and foreign energy supplies.

Vermont's clean energy commitment. Vermont has long been a leader in renewable energy development to help reduce harmful air pollution and climate change. Swanton Wind will be similar to Georgia Mountain Community Wind (located in Milton and Georgia, VT) in that Vermonters are developing the



Figure 2: Swanton Wind is located east of State Rt. 105, in southeastern Swanton Town, in Franklin County.

project for Vermonters. To protect the environment and the state's economy, Vermont has created one of the most ambitious renewable energy goals in the nation: to generate 90% of its total energy from renewable sources by 2050. To meet this goal, wind power will be an important part of Vermont's power supply.

Strengthening the local economy. The project will provide economic and educational benefits to the local community over its projected lifetime by contributing millions of dollars in local and state tax payments and creating significant job opportunities for local contractors during the construction phase.



Figure 3: Wind turbine schematic with typical dimensions.

STATUS

Numerous environmental, engineering and economical studies are underway, including the acquisition and analysis of on-site natural resource data, wetlands resource investigation, archeological, visual and sound analyses, electrical interconnection studies and economic analyses. This work should be substantially complete in summer 2015 to enable Swanton Wind to begin permitting with the Vermont Public Service Board and others. Swanton Wind targets to break ground in the second half of 2016.

GET INVOLVED

Swanton Wind welcomes input and support from community members, businesses and interested parties. For more information please visit www.swantonwindvt.com, call 802-466-2334 or email swantonwind@gmail.com.

For more information on Vermont's wind energy resources and capabilities visit:

Renewable Energy Vermont

<http://www.vermont.org/main/technology/wind/>

8/17/15