

The *EQB Monitor*

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Submission Deadline: [View 2020 Schedule](#)
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In this publication:

- [EQB Announcements](#)
- [Environmental Assessment Worksheets](#)
- [Notices](#)

The *EQB Monitor* is a weekly publication announcing environmental review documents, public comment periods and other actions of the Environmental Quality Board. For more information on environmental review, please visit the [EQB website](#).

You can manage your subscription to the *EQB Monitor* [here](#). Be sure to add MNEQB@public.govdelivery.com to your address book or safe sender list.



Check the [EQB Monitor Schedule](#) and [EQB calendar](#) for more details on *Monitor* deadlines and Board Meetings. Meeting minutes, agendas and additional notices are also posted on the [EQB Website](#).

EQB Announcements

CANCELED - EQB Board Meeting - March 16, 2020

Please be advised, the Environmental Quality Board meeting scheduled for March 16, 2020 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm is now canceled.

In light of the [community mitigation strategies](#) announced to slow the spread of COVID-19, we are canceling our Board meeting for this coming Monday 3/16. We will take up the scheduled agenda items at a future meeting. Our next regularly scheduled Board meeting is April 15, and we will be tracking developments with COVID-19 leading up to that meeting.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we join the effort to reduce the impact of novel coronavirus on our communities. We hope that everyone stays safe and healthy. Please don't hesitate to reach out to EQB Staff with questions (info.EQB@state.mn.us).

Environmental Assessment Worksheets

Project Title: Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements

Comment Deadline: April 8, 2020

Project Description: The City of Fosston is performing an environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act in order that they may assess the environmental impacts of a proposed wastewater facility expansion project in Polk County, Minnesota. The City of Fosston is requesting comment on environmental issues related to this project. The project is being proposed to expand the existing wastewater treatment ponds and provide other minor upgrades to the existing wastewater ponds.

The project includes: Construction of two (2) Wastewater Oxidation Ponds. Pond #1 is proposed at 16 acres and pond #2 is proposed at 20 acres as well as minor related accessories and improvements. Construction will occur within the city limits of the City of Fosston along Polk County State Aid Highway 30. The project is expected to be constructed during the 2020 - 2022 construction seasons.

Link to Document:

ftp://198.174.61.11/EmailFTP/03042020_154707/Fosston_Wastewater_EAW.zip

Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU): City of Fosston

RGU Contact Person:

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Notices

Minnesota Department of Agriculture-- Notification of Release of Genetically Engineered Organisms

Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC filed a Notification for Release of a Genetically Engineered Organism with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDA notification number **20-NO-07**. Notification is for genetically modified **CORN**, pending USDA-APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) approval for the environmental release of transgenic corn, referenced as Application Number **20-055-104n**. The counties identified for release include the following: **Dakota-1 location with 10 acres; Faribault-2 locations with 10 acres per location; Goodhue-1 location with 10 acres; Mower-2 locations with 10 acres per location; and Rice-1 location with 10 acres;** Project categories include **HT (Herbicide Tolerance) and IR (Insect Resistance)**.

Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. filed a Notification for Release of a Genetically Engineered Organism with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDA notification number **20-NO-08**. Notification is for genetically modified **CORN**, pending USDA-APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) approval for the environmental release of transgenic corn, referenced as Application Number **20-003-101rm**. The counties identified for release include the following: **Blue Earth-2 locations at 8 and 25 acres; Fillmore-2 locations at 10 and 15 acres; Goodhue-1 location at 15 acres; Stevens-1 location at 10 acres.** Project categories include **AP (Agronomic Performance), HT (Herbicide Tolerance), IR (Insect Resistance), MG (Marker Gene), OO (Other) and PQ (Product Quality)**.

Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. filed a Notification for Release of a Genetically Engineered Organism with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDA notification number **20-NO-09**. Notification is for genetically modified **CORN**, pending USDA-APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) approval for the environmental release of transgenic corn, referenced as Application Number **20-003-102rm**. The counties identified for release include the following: **Blue Earth-2 locations at 8 and 25 acres; Fillmore-2 locations at 10 and 15 acres; Goodhue-1 location at 15 acres; Stevens-1 location at 10 acres.** Project categories include **AP (Agronomic Performance), HT (Herbicide Tolerance), IR (Insect Resistance), MG (Marker Gene), OO (Other) and PQ (Product Quality)**.

Monsanto Company filed a Notification for Release of a Genetically Engineered Organism with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDA notification number **20-NO-10**. Notification is for genetically modified **SUGAR BEET**, pending USDA-APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) approval for the environmental release of transgenic sugar beet, referenced as Application Number **20-062-101n**. The counties identified for release include the following: **Benton-2 locations with 20 acres per location; and Freeborn-1 location with 10 acres.** Project categories include **HT (Herbicide Tolerance)**.

Betaseed, Inc. filed a Notification for Release of a Genetically Engineered Organism with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDA notification number **20-NO-11**. Notification is for genetically modified **SUGAR BEET**, pending USDA-APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) approval for the environmental release of transgenic sugar beet, referenced as Application Number **20-064-101n**. The counties identified for release include the following: **Clay-4 locations with not more than 10 acres per location; Dakota-2 locations with not more than 10 acres per location; Goodhue-1 locations with not more than 10 acres; and**

Wilken-1 location with not more than 10 acres per location. Project categories include **PQ (Product Quality)**.

Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC filed a Notification for Release of a Genetically Engineered Organism with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDA notification number **20-NO-012**. Notification is for genetically modified **CORN**, pending USDA-APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) approval for the environmental release of transgenic corn, referenced as Application Number **20-055-107n**. The counties identified for release include the following: **Dakota-1 location with 10 acres; Faribault-2 locations with 10 acres per location; Goodhue-1 location with 10 acres; Mower-2 locations with 10 acres per location; and Rice-1 location with 10 acres;** Project categories include **HT (Herbicide Tolerance) and IR (Insect Resistance)**.

Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC filed a Notification for Release of a Genetically Engineered Organism with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, MDA notification number **20-NO-13**. Notification is for genetically modified **CORN**, pending USDA-APHIS Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS) approval for the environmental release of transgenic corn, referenced as Application Number **20-055-108n**. The counties identified for release include the following: **Dakota-1 location with 10 acres; Faribault-2 locations with 10 acres per location; Goodhue-1 location with 10 acres; Mower-2 locations with 10 acres per location; and Rice-1 location with 10 acres;** Project categories include **HT (Herbicide Tolerance) and IR (Insect Resistance)**.

For additional information contact:

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Notice of Public Hearing

Issued: March 6, 2020

In the Matter of the Applications of Buffalo Ridge Wind Energy, LLC for a Certificate of Need and a Site Permit for the Buffalo Ridge Wind Project in Lincoln and Pipestone Counties, Minnesota

Public Utilities Commission Docket Number: IP-7006/CN-19-309, IP-7006/WS-19-394

Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) Docket Number: 82-2500-36550

Date: March 26, 2020

Time: 2:00 PM and 6:00 PM

Location: Lake Benton Community Center, 114 South Center Street, Lake Benton, MN 56149

Bad Weather? Find out if a meeting is canceled. Call (toll-free) 1-855-731-6208 or 651-201-2213 or visit mn.gov/puc

The Honorable Barbara J. Case, an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) with the Office of Administrative Hearings, will administer these hearings. The purpose of the public hearings is to receive comments regarding the need for the proposed project and whether additional conditions should be included in the draft site permit.

Project Description

In July 2019, Buffalo Ridge Wind, LLC (BRW or Applicant) submitted applications to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (Commission) to construct and operate a large wind energy conversion system (LWECS) in Lincoln and Pipestone Counties. In order to construct the Buffalo Ridge Wind Project, the applicant must be granted a certificate of need and a site permit from the Commission.

The proposed project would entail construction of 40 wind turbines with a combined nameplate capacity of 109 megawatts (MW). The project also includes a collector substation, transformers, collection lines, an operation and maintenance (O&M) building, permanent meteorological tower(s), and gravel access roads. The project footprint would occupy approximately 17,609 acres of land southeast of the city of Lake Benton and west of the city of Tyler in Lincoln County. The total project impact to land (cultivated, pasture, vegetation, open land) to construct the turbine pads, access roads, substation, and the maintenance building will be approximately 37.4 acres.

On February 21, 2020, BRW submitted a revised application to move some of the proposed turbine locations a distance of between 23 to 3800 feet and to designate some of the alternative locations that were studied as primary locations. This layout change was prompted by concerns from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Defense (DoD), and U.S. Air Force (USAF) that the original turbine layout could impact the common air route surveillance radar (CARSR) operating in the area.

The applicant asserted that the Project is intended to assist Great River Energy in meeting its renewable energy goals.

Public Hearing Information

- Public hearings start on time.
- Arrive a few minutes early so you have time to sign in, pick up materials, and find a seat.
- Administrative Law Judge Barbara J. Case presides over the meetings.
- Commission, Department of Commerce, and Buffalo Ridge staff members will be available to answer questions about the permitting process and the project.
- You may add verbal comments, written comments, or both into the record.

Submit Comments

Topics for Public Comment:

- Is the proposed project needed and in the public interest?
- What are the costs and benefits of the proposed project?
- What are the environmental and human impacts of the proposed project and how can these impacts be addressed?
- Should the Commission issue a certificate of need and a site permit for the project?
- Are there other project-related issues or concerns?

Comment Period: March 6, 2020 through April 9, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

Comments received after the close of the comment period may or may not be considered by the Commission.

Online: Visit mn.gov/puc, select the *Comment* button on the main menu to connect to the Public Comment page.

Email: Comments can be emailed to publicadvisor.puc@state.mn.us.

US Mail: Public Advisor, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, 121 7th Place East, Suite 350, Saint Paul, MN 55101

eFiling: Visit mn.gov/puc, select *Comment*, and follow the prompts.

Important: Comments will be made available to the public via the Public Utilities Commission's website, except in limited circumstances consistent with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The Commission does not edit or delete personal identifying information from submissions.

Process Information

The Commission must approve a certificate of need and a site permit before the project can be built. Buffalo Ridge Wind submitted certificate of need and site permit applications in July 2019. The Commission's decision-making process takes about twelve months.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy and Environmental Review and Analysis unit (EERA) issued an environmental report in the certificate of need docket and proposed a preliminary draft site permit in the site permit docket for this project. On February 26, 2020, the Commission issued a draft site permit for the project for public review. The draft site permit does not constitute approval for the project and can be changed or denied by the Commission.

The public hearing is an opportunity for the public to ask questions and submit recommendations for the Commission's consideration in reaching a final decision. After the public hearing and subsequent comment period, ALJ Barbara Case will prepare a report for the Commission.

After the report has been submitted, the Commission will review all the information in the record, including written comments and comments received at the public hearing. A final decision on the certificate of need and site permit applications for this project is expected by summer of 2020.

Eminent Domain: The applicant does not have eminent domain authority to acquire land necessary for the project. All leases or easements secured to acquire land for the project are voluntary.

How to Learn More

Department of Commerce Project Website: <https://mn.gov/eera/web/project/13711/>

Project Mailing List: Sign up to receive notices about project milestones and opportunities to participate (meetings, comment periods, etc.). Contact docketing.puc@state.mn.us or 651-201-2246 with the docket number (19-309 for the certificate of need or 19-394 for the site permit application), your name, mailing address and email address.

Subscribe to the Docket: Receive email notification when new documents are filed in this matter at [eFiling.com](https://efiling.com), or go to mn.gov/puc, select *Comment*, and follow the prompts. *Note - subscribing may result in a large number of emails.

Full Case Record: See all documents filed in this docket via the Commission's website - mn.gov/puc, select *Search eDockets*, enter the year (19) and the docket number (309) for the

certificate of need, or enter the year (19) and the docket number (394) for the site permit application, select Search.

Community Locations: The certificate of need and site permit applications, the environmental report, and the draft site permit are available at these locations:

- Lake Benton Library, 110 East Benton Street, Lake Benton, MN 56149
- Meinders Community Library, 1401 7th Street SW, Pipestone, MN 56164

Minnesota Statutes and Rules: The certificate of need application is reviewed under Minnesota Statute 216B.243 and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7849. The LWECS site permit is reviewed under Minnesota Statute 216F and Minnesota Rules Chapter 7854. Minnesota Statutes and Rules are available at www.revisor.mn.gov.

Project Contacts

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Buffalo Ridge Wind, LLC Project Contact:

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561-304-6548

If any reasonable accommodation is needed so that you may fully participate in these meetings, for example sign language or large print materials, please contact the Office of Administrative Hearings at 651-361-7900 (voice) at least one week before the meeting.

To request this document in another format such as large print or audio, call 651.296.0406 (voice). Persons with a hearing or speech impairment may call using their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.