

AESTHETIC SITING CRITERIA

The SEC should take into consideration, and the Applicant shall present its perspective fully in its original proposal and any supplementary filings, on the potential impact of a proposed project as to whether the proposed wind project will have unreasonable adverse effects on aesthetics and the scenic resources of the surrounding region.

Applicant shall develop and submit a Visual Impact Assessment Report that provides, at a minimum, the following information and analysis of the project's impacts to the surrounding areas:

- For any wind projects consisting of more than five wind turbines or greater than three wind turbines higher than 400 feet measured at the tip of the blade, the area of aesthetic impact analysis shall be a 10-mile radius around the project.
- Applicant's viewshed maps shall define and delineate the visual impact area within a 10-mile radius of all of the turbines' locations, and shall include both a "bare earth" analysis and a "vegetated" analysis. The latter shall assume a 40-foot tree height.
- Applicant shall describe the project in detail including turbines, roads, electrical connections, associated structures, clearing and grading.
- Applicant shall describe the project's location in detail, and discuss the general character of the surrounding area.
- Applicant shall identify all public areas from which the project will be visible. These should include lakes, ponds, trails, public parks, natural areas that are publicly accessible, village centers, cultural resources, state or federal highways, identified scenic highways, and any historic sites open to the general public.
- Applicant shall describe in detail the visibility of the project from all public vantage points. These include the following: Particularly sensitive viewpoints shall include all that have one or more of the following:
 - a. Viewpoints used by the public
 - b. Viewpoints that have identified recreational, scenic or cultural values
 - c. Viewpoints that are valued as natural settings
 - d. Viewpoints that permit a clear view of the project
 - e. Viewpoints of the project that would be of relatively long duration or over an extended area or corridor
 - f. Viewpoints that provide a unique resource area experience
 - g. Residential or private land viewpoints of long duration or exposure to the project
 - h. All viewpoints in close proximity (within 2 miles) to the project
- Views of the project from all sensitive viewpoints will be described in detail including the proximity, portions of the project that would be visible (e.g. turbines, power lines, clearings or graded slopes), area of the vantage point from which the project would be visible. The degree of contrast with the existing condition should be discussed.

- Areas that are valued for providing a natural setting are particularly sensitive to change that involves built elements, and should be analyzed in particular detail.
- Applicant shall provide both photographs of existing conditions as well as simulation photographs illustrating the appearance of the project from a number of vantage points, particularly those with more sensitive viewpoints as defined above.
- All simulation photographs shall be taken using a SLR camera. All photographs will be taken at an equivalent focal length of 50mm. Simulations shall be printed at a size that is approximately 11"x17." Where the project cannot fit onto one page, each individual 50mm photograph should be reproduced on a separate page with a merged photograph following separately.
- Applicant shall include a comparison of simulated versus actual visual impact photographs for projects recently constructed by Applicant.
- Night lighting should be avoided on all projects through the use of motion-activated lighting (e.g. OCAS). If lighting cannot be avoided, a nighttime simulation must be provided.
- Due to the size and visibility of wind turbines, distance zones shall be defined as: "foreground" within 1 mile of project, "middleground" within 1 to 5 miles of project, and "background" greater than 5 miles.
- Applicant shall consider existing projects wherever an existing project's 10-mile radius intersects with the proposed project's 10-mile radius, and discuss the resulting cumulative impacts.
- Applicant will discuss generally the potential impacts to nearby private residents (within 1 mile of the project) to the extent possible without visiting the property.
- Applicant shall discuss any local or regional plans that address the project area or any of the vantage points from which the project would be visible.
- Applicant shall evaluate the aesthetic impacts to each vantage point as well as the overall aesthetic impacts of the project to the study area as a whole. The applicant should generally categorize the visual impacts as "minimal," "moderate," or "significant," explaining why this conclusion was reached.