

6.0 GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS

Since publication of the DEIS, a number of wind farm facilities have become operational in the region, and the industry is well established locally. The closest operational wind farm is the Noble Chateaugay Windpark, located just east of the Project Site in the Town of Chateaugay. Other wind projects nearby include EDPR's Marble River Windfarm as well as Noble's Clinton, Ellenburg, and Altona facilities in Clinton County. Revenue from taxes, payments to landowners, and economic activity from construction, operation, and maintenance activities provide economic/financial benefits of these to local communities that encourage economic development/stability, and it is likely that impacts from the Jericho Rise Wind Farm would be similar.

Growth inducing impacts discussed in the DEIS that remain accurate include short term increases in economic activity during construction, a small number of long term jobs created, local infrastructure improvements that could support unrelated economic development, and economic benefits to participating landowners. Increased revenue for farms hosting wind turbines could allow them to stay in operation and stabilize income in less productive years. Tax revenue paid to the Towns of Chateaugay and Belmont could have positive impacts by allowing for reduced local tax rates and improving schools and other services. All of these impacts could result in modest increases in local population and associated economic development. However, based on experience with other operating wind projects in the area, the level of growth is not anticipated to be substantial enough to significantly change patterns of land use or demand for community services and facilities.

Although the DEIS indicates that tourism could be a potential benefit, current conditions indicate that the Jericho Rise Wind Farm is not likely to draw significant tourism. Neither Franklin County nor Clinton County lists wind facilities as a tourist attraction, and data on how many people have traveled to the region to see wind farms do not exist. The DEIS asserts that the effects from tourism could be short-lived, as the novelty of wind energy decreases and wind farms become more common. As the Jericho Rise Wind Farm is neither the first, nor the largest, of its kind in the area, it is unlikely that this Project would draw additional tourists to the area.