

8.0 EFFECTS OF USE & CONSERVATION OF ENERGY RESOURCES

As described in Section 8.0 of the DEIS, the Project will have significant, long-term beneficial effects on the use and conservation of energy resources, particularly as a contributor to meeting federal, state, and international energy policies and initiatives. This section provides information about new energy policies and initiatives that have been promulgated since the release of the DEIS and considers Project consistency with such policies. A discussion of the beneficial impacts of the Project in mitigating climate change is provided in Section 2.4.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) continues to review the science regarding climate change, and they released the Fifth Assessment Report in 2013. The report considers new evidence of climate change since the Fourth Assessment Report of 2007, and again concludes that warming of the climate system is unequivocal and that further warming will cause “severe, pervasive, and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems” (IPCC 2013, 2014). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol continue to provide global targets for emissions reductions. Increasing the use of pollution-free renewable energy as a replacement for existing sources that contribute to greenhouse gases is imperative to meeting internationally established pollution reduction goals and curbing global climate change.

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) released its *2014-2018 Strategic Plan* in April 2014. The Strategic Plan contains 12 strategic objectives organized around three distinct goals: 1) Science and Energy, 2) Nuclear Security, and 3) Management and Performance. The first strategic objective is to advance the goals and objectives in the President’s Climate Action Plan by supporting prudent development, deployment, and efficient use of energy resources that also create new jobs and industries. USDOE “is committed to energy solutions that make best use of our domestic energy resources and help the nation achieve an approximately 17% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels by 2020, and further reductions in the post-2020 period.” The President’s Climate Action Plan contains a goal of doubling renewable energy generation from wind, solar, and geothermal sources between 2012 and 2020. A more diverse energy mix, including wind energy projects like the Jericho Rise Wind Farm, will provide multiple options to meet demand and achieve environmental goals (USDOE, 2014).

The New York State Energy Plan has been updated twice since the DEIS was released, with the most recent Plan published in June, 2015. The Project is consistent with the objectives outlined in this Plan, which include increased use of energy systems that enable the State to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while stabilizing long-term energy costs, the key objective being to increase the percentage of non-fossil fuel consuming (i.e., renewable) sources of generation, and improving the State’s energy independence through development of in-state energy supply resources. Specific targets include reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% from 1990 levels and generating 50%

of electricity from renewable resources by 2030. The State Energy Plan recognizes that wind energy projects, like the proposed Jericho Rise Wind Farm, will play a role in fulfilling this objective (NYSEPB, 2015). Based on the 2015 State Energy Plan, other public benefits of the Project related to energy use include the following:

- Production and use of in-state energy resources can increase the reliability and security of energy systems, reduce long-term energy costs, and contribute to meeting climate change and environmental objectives.
- To the extent that renewable resources are able to displace the use of carbon and particulate emitting fossil fuels, relying more heavily on these in-state resources will also reduce public health and environmental risks posed by all sectors that produce and use energy.
- By focusing energy investments on in-state opportunities, New York can reduce the amount of dollars “exported” out of the state to pay for energy resources.
- By re-directing those dollars back into the state economy, New York will increase the amount of business and economic activity related to power generation within the state. Renewable energy contributes to the reduction of energy price volatility in the long-term and enables wind to displace other fossil based forms of generation.

The 2015 State Energy Plan provides a vision for New York’s energy future that consists of “a clean, resilient, and affordable energy system,” and it is clear that renewable energy, including wind power, will be a major component of energy produced in the State. The State Energy Plan evaluates the existing, planned, and potential use of New York’s renewable energy resources, including hydropower, wind power, bioenergy, solar energy, and geothermal energy. The benefits of renewable energy resources as described in the 2015 Plan include helping achieve environmental goals; creating jobs, income, and economic growth; reducing imported energy and reliance on fossil fuels; reducing price volatility due to fossil fuel use; reducing the negative health impacts of energy use; reducing peak demand and transmission and distribution constraints; and exerting downward pressure on wholesale electricity prices. The Project is consistent with these environmental goals, and it will provide an additional source of clean, renewable energy for New York State.