

# Tazewell County Wind Energy

## Myths and Facts

**Myth:** *The proposed project will provide no new tax revenue for Tazewell County.*

**Fact:** A 60 MW (30 – 40 turbines) wind facility will generate approximately \$600,000 in property and real estate taxes in year 1 for the locality, depreciating over time for roughly 20 years. Tax revenue for Tazewell will be approximately as follows: Year 5 - \$464,914; Year 10 - \$273,674; Year 15 - \$176,531; Year 20 - \$180,989.

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**Myth:** *The proposed project will make my property value decline.*

**Fact:** There have been a number of studies related to property values near wind farms. One study, by Ben Hoen and the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, covers communities nationwide and utilizes rigorous statistical methods. Preliminary analysis finds no statistical evidence of a negative impact on home values near wind facilities.

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**Myth:** *Dominion/BP plans to study or build a wind facility in Burkes Garden.*

**Fact:** We are not pursuing wind farms at Burkes Garden and turbines on East River Mountain won't be visible from Burkes Garden. Other than our proposed project on East River Mountain, we are not considering other wind energy projects in Tazewell County at this time. We are evaluating other potential sites in the Southwestern Virginia region, but none would be visible from Tazewell County or Burkes Garden.

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**Myth:** *An aging wind farm will forever exist on East River Mountain – long after the facility has expired.*

**Fact:** If BP and Dominion elected not to re-service the turbines at the end of their useful life, we will be held responsible for removing the turbines and roads on East River Mountain – even in the unlikely event that one or both companies become bankrupt. Before the companies proceed with construction, they will enter into a de-commissioning agreement with the county that requires the turbines to be taken down.

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**Myth:** *Large access roads and turbine platforms on the tops of ridges will cause problems with water drainage that could lead to flooding.*

**Fact:** We are required to prepare an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan with the Commonwealth. We will utilize best management practices to minimize any impacts to local streams and ground water during and after construction.

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**Myth:** *Blasting away of mountain tops in order to place wind turbines on the ridge top will destroy the mountains.*

**Fact:** The ridgelines are not expected to be significantly altered. Tree cutting will be minimized to the greatest extent possible and done only where the turbines and access roads will be placed. The site access road will be gravel (smaller than Route 460; approximately 36 feet during construction and graded back to 18 feet post-construction); foundations of the turbines will consist of poured concrete in small areas on and off the ridgeline.

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**Myth:** *Wind turbines provide no real benefit to U.S. dependence on foreign oil or to global warming.*

**Fact:** Since wind energy requires no fuel, deploying wind energy can assist in reducing the effects of rising fuel costs, both foreign and domestic. Wind energy produces no emissions and consumes no water! In addition, a growing number of green companies seek to relocate to areas with renewable energy facilities.

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**Myth:** *No new jobs will be created.*

**Fact:** A 60 MW Wind Farm would create 150 construction jobs during the 8-month construction period, \$10 million in local products and services (gravel, concrete, etc.) and 10 - 15 long-term jobs during the operation of the wind farm.

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**Myth:** *Each turbine will require 4 to 6 acres of cleared space.*

**Fact:** Most turbines are generally spaced between 750 and 1,500 feet apart. Additionally, while some developers have taken the easy approach to site preparation and over-cleared timber for ease of construction, many others have taken a proactive approach and worked with the turbine manufacturers, transportation companies, and site contractors to reduce the amount of clearing to only what is need to safely/efficiently develop the site. While this makes logistics and construction a challenge, BP and Dominion are committed to this approach. Moreover, existing timber and agriculture practices can continue between the spacing of the turbines in the United States.

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**Myth:** *Dominion/BP will use powers of eminent domain for the Tazewell County wind project.*

**Fact:** Landowners can decide on their own whether or not to participate in our project. We are in early stages of negotiation with many landowners and have leases secured with several. Thus far, support from landowners has been high.

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**Myth:** *The proposed Dominion/BP wind farm will pollute nearby streams and rivers and may lead to increased flooding.*

**Fact:** Wind farms in general utilize very little chemicals, lubricants, etc. and do not generate any appreciable amount of hazardous waste. We at Dominion and BP understand locating a wind farm atop a ridgeline, with steep slopes, shallow soils, and potentially high quality water sources located down slope of the project is a concern for citizens. With proper planning, project design, and utilization of current state-of-the-art stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs), these important resources will be adequately protected from degradation. Further, BP Wind has taken the initiative to create a risk assessment model that will identify “at risk” turbine locations and then provide secondary containment areas to guard against any oil/chemical transport in the highly unlikely event of a turbine leak.

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**Myth:** *Dominion and BP will spray herbicides on the mountaintops to control vegetation.*

**Fact:** No such chemicals will be utilized on-site during or after construction as part of the wind farm. Maintenance clearing around the turbine and along access roads will be limited to mechanical methods.

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**Myth:** Companies proposing this project have no real vested interest in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**Fact:** Dominion's corporate headquarters are located in Richmond, Virginia and it is one of the oldest electric companies in the country. Dominion delivers power to over 2 million customers and maintains and operations over a dozen energy generating facilities in the Commonwealth.

BP Alternative Energy has a corporate office located in Charlottesville, Virginia and operates and develops approximately 100 projects in 26 states.

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For additional information, please do not hesitate to call Hank Seltzer with BP or James Beazley with Dominion:

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