

Eigg Mountain Wind Project

Project Summary

The Eigg Mountain Wind Project (the “Project”) is a proposed new wind power project in Antigonish County, Nova Scotia. The Project includes 22 wind turbines of 7.0 megawatts (MW) each, for a combined total installed capacity of 154 MW. It also includes access roads, a power transmission line and collector system, an electrical substation, and an operations and maintenance building. The turbines will be approximately 200 m in height, from the bottom of the turbine to the top of the blade. The Project is being developed by Eigg Mountain Wind Inc. (the “Proponent”), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Renewable Energy Systems Canada (RES).

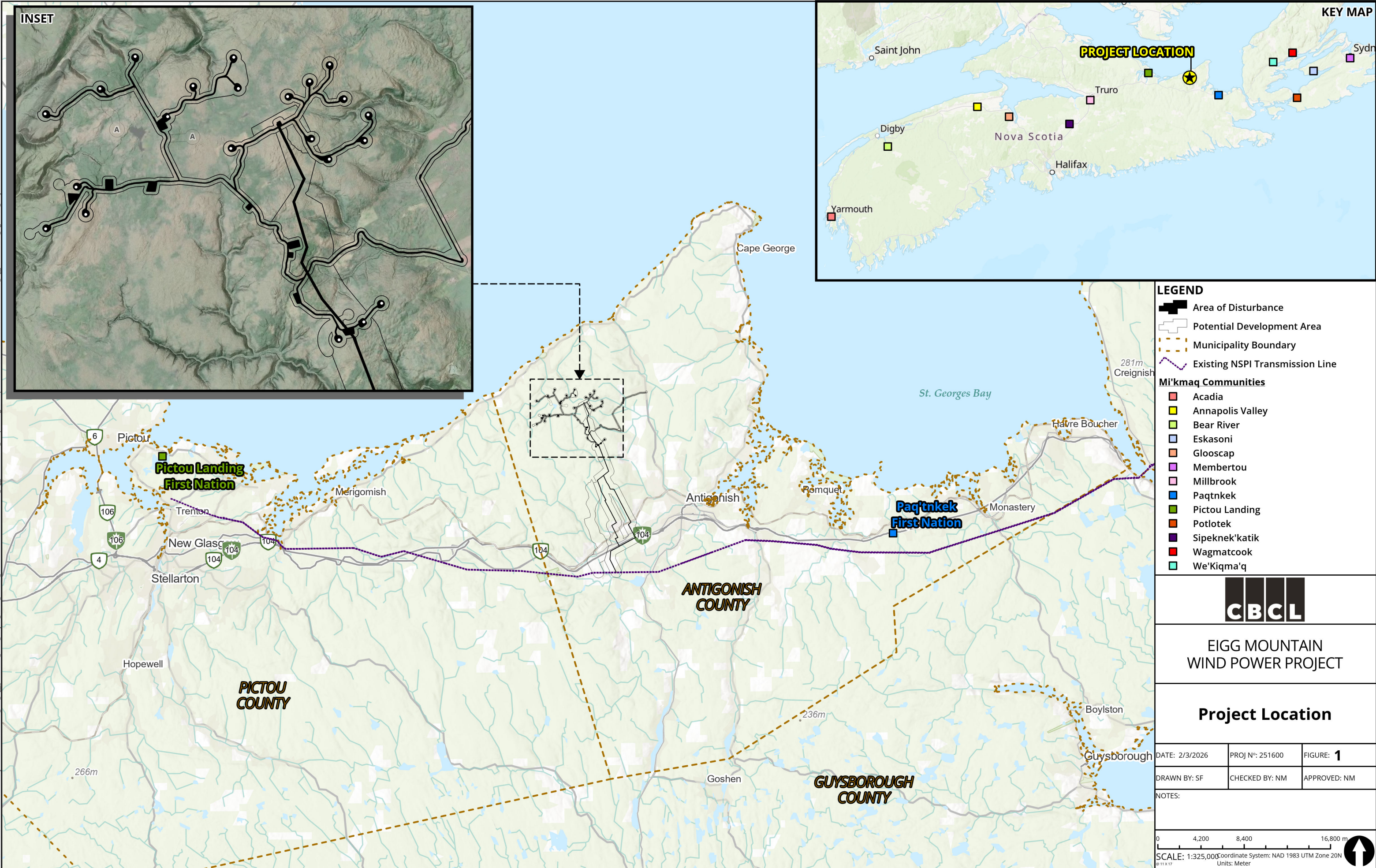
The Project was submitted to the province’s Green Choice Program, which is designed to provide clean energy to major institutions and Nova Scotia ratepayers. The Project was selected under the program and electricity from the Project will go into Nova Scotia’s power grid to help the province reach its climate targets, including 80% renewable electricity by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. The Project has entered into a power purchase agreement with Nova Scotia Power.

The Project turbines (as required under the Green Choice Program), the substation, the operations and maintenance building, and most of the transmission line are all proposed on private lands, near the Eigg Mountain-James River Wilderness Area, roughly 11 km from the Town of Antigonish. Small sections of access roads and small sections of the transmission line will be located on Crown land. The location of the Project is shown in Figure 1.

Construction is expected to begin in late 2026 (if approved) and take about two years, beginning operation by late 2028. Construction involves tree clearing, building new access roads or upgrading existing access roads, preparing turbine sites, installing turbines, installing electrical equipment, constructing an electrical substation, and constructing an operation and maintenance building.

The Nova Scotia power purchase agreement for the Project is for 25 years; however, the Project could have a total lifespan of more than 30 years if the agreement is extended after the initial term. During the operational period, staff will monitor and maintain the turbines, manage vegetation, and handle snow clearing and site upkeep.

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Project Benefits

The Project is expected to bring several environmental and economic benefits. One of the most important contributions is its role in helping Nova Scotia move away from coal and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Project will also provide economic benefits, including local employment, revenue for the Municipality of the County of Antigonish, and local business opportunities:

- ▶ 200 to 250 jobs during construction
- ▶ Long-term employment during operations
- ▶ More municipal tax revenue
- ▶ Business opportunities for local companies and contractors
- ▶ An Annual Community Benefits Fund through a formal agreement with the Municipality

Engagement with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia

The Project lands are part of Mi'kma'ki, the traditional and unceded homeland of the Mi'kmaq. RES has engaged with Mi'kmaw communities and organizations, including the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, the Office of L'Nu Affairs, and Kwi'mu'kw Maw-klusuaqn.

A Mi'kmaq Ecological Knowledge Study identified culturally important areas and key wildlife habitat, such as Mainland Moose and local watersheds. This information helped guide Project design and was used in the environmental assessment. The Proponent is committed to ongoing communication with the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia for this Project.

Engagement with the Local Community

RES connected with the community in several ways as part of this Project. This included holding public drop-in sessions, meeting with interested groups and individual community members, handing out information pamphlets, posting updates in local gathering places, and sharing news online through newsletters, websites, and email lists.

The goal of talking with the community was to explain the Project, answer questions, hear comments, and learn from local knowledge. The open-house sessions, in particular, gave people a chance to speak directly with the Project team. Feedback from these sessions was documented and will be used to help guide the next steps in Project planning.

Managing Environmental Impact

Air Quality, Noise, and Lighting

Environmental protection is a major part of the Project planning. Because construction can affect air quality, noise levels, and nighttime lighting, the Project includes measures such as watering roads to control dust, limiting disruptive activities to daytime hours, and using the minimum lighting needed for safety. Operation of wind turbines generates noise. All of the

turbines are located at least 900 metres from homes, and assessments show that the Project will meet all required limits for both noise and shadow flicker. The Proponent will maintain a Project website to provide updates and will have a process in place to handle concerns from the public.

Geology and Groundwater

The land itself will also be carefully managed. Construction may disturb soils and require occasional blasting, so workers will stabilize exposed soils, leave root systems wherever possible to prevent erosion, and replant areas after work is finished. Drinking water wells in the area will be surveyed before blasting, and strict procedures will be followed to handle fuel and other hazardous materials safely.

Surface Water, Fish, and Fish Habitat

Work near streams and waterbodies has also been studied closely. Where roads cross streams, properly designed culverts will be installed to maintain natural water flow and protect fish passage. Construction near waterways could temporarily disturb sediments, so the Proponent plans to complete this work during the “least-risk window,” when water levels are low during the summer. Natural vegetation buffers will remain in place around streams and lakes, and a detailed plan will guide how waterbodies and fish habitat are protected during construction.

Wetlands, Plants, and Lichens

The Project has been designed to avoid most wetlands, but some impacts cannot be prevented. For these, the company will minimize disturbance, follow all approval requirements, and provide compensation for lost wetland area. Sensitive plants and lichens, such as species at risk, have been avoided, and old-growth forest areas have been excluded from the design. Where possible, the Project makes use of land that has already been disturbed in the past by forestry or other activities.

Wildlife

Wildlife protection is also an important part of the Project. Mainland Moose, a species at risk in Nova Scotia, is a major focus of the environmental review. To reduce the Project’s impact, the design makes use of existing roads where possible, avoids important habitat, and considers moose movement corridors. Wildlife monitoring will continue after the Project is built. As for all wind power projects, birds and bats can sometimes collide with turbines. The Project avoids high-value habitat where possible, minimizes lighting that may attract birds, and will carry out post-construction monitoring. If the monitoring shows that the turbines are having a greater impact than expected, the Proponent will adjust operations based on provincial guidance.

Socio-economic Considerations

From a community perspective, most of the Project's social and economic effects are expected to be positive, but there may be some temporary inconveniences. Construction traffic may increase for a time, some trails may need brief detours, and the turbines will change the appearance of the landscape. A Traffic Management Plan will be created to allow safe and efficient movement of construction vehicles, and the company will use existing roads as much as possible to limit disturbance.

Heritage and Culture

The Project overlaps with three areas where important archaeological materials might be found. Before construction begins, more fieldwork—such as shovel testing—will be done to check these areas. If any heritage items or archaeological sites are found during construction, the Contingency Plan will be followed, starting with an immediate stop to all construction activities.

Climate Change Considerations

Although building the Project will create some emissions, these are relatively small and are expected to be offset within the first year the turbines are running. Over the Project lifetime, the total emissions from building, transporting materials, operating, and maintaining the facility would equal only about five days of Nova Scotia's current electricity-related emissions. Replacing some of the province's existing electricity supply with clean power from this Project means that the "payback" period for these emissions is just about 15 days.

Cumulative Effects

The Project is located close to several other wind energy developments, as well as areas where forestry and mining have taken place in the past and continue today. It overlaps with land that has already been logged, which has contributed to considerable forest loss in the region. There is also a network of trails used for recreational purposes such as snowmobiling and ATV riding, which runs through the Project site and surrounding areas. The Project is expected to have some environmental effects similar to those of these existing activities. However, with careful planning and mitigation measures, its overall effect on the environment will be low. Ongoing monitoring of wildlife, birds, and bats in the area will help identify any combined effects from all activities in the area and guide any needed actions.

Conclusion

The Eigg Mountain Wind Project has been carefully designed using environmental studies, Mi'kmaq knowledge, regulatory guidance, and public feedback. Although the Project spans a large area, only a fraction of this area is used for the Project's infrastructure. The Wilderness Area and old growth forest have been avoided, and only a few hectares of wetland will be disturbed. With the planned mitigation and compensation measures, the environmental assessment concludes that no significant negative environmental effects are expected. Per thorough public engagement efforts over the past several years with the local community, Indigenous groups, local stakeholders and government, the Project is well received and strongly supported.

The Project will support Nova Scotia's transition to clean energy, provide economic benefits to the local community, Mi'kmaw communities, and contribute to the province's long-term climate and long-term environmental goals.