Columbia Wind Project
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General

Why is the project needed?
The Columbia Wind project (the "Project") is needed to meet increased demand. Wind energy is a cost-effective way to serve customers because it has no fuel costs, and it can work in tandem with the other resources in our balanced energy portfolio – like natural gas and battery storage – to ensure the lights stay on during periods of high demand and inclement weather. It provides a competitively priced, renewable energy source that strengthens our balanced energy strategy for a reliable and resilient grid. Additionally, the Project delivers immediate and long-lasting economic benefits to the local community.

Will this project raise my electric bill?
Wind energy helps protect customers from rising costs because it has no fuel expense. By adding wind to our portfolio, Alliant Energy can meet regional energy needs more affordably and helps provide long-term resource cost stability for our customers. Also, in Wisconsin, utilities like Alliant Energy review rates every two years as required by law. Any changes to rates are reviewed by regulators to ensure they are fair and reasonable. When we invest in new projects, we do so carefully and with our customers in mind – focusing on reliability, long-term value, and helping keep bills as low as possible.

Isn't wind unreliable?
The wind does not always blow but it is highly predictable and can be planned for using sophisticated forecasting tools to anticipate changes in wind production and balance supply and demand in real-time. In addition, Alliant Energy supports reliability by investing in a diverse mix of resources – including natural gas, solar, and battery storage – to help ensure the grid remains stable and dependable around the clock.

What about property values?
Numerous, extensive independent studies show that wind energy does not lower property values. In fact, increased local tax revenue from wind projects often results in better schools, improved roads, and enhanced emergency services, making communities more attractive places to live.

Will I be able to see the turbines from my house?
Visibility depends on your specific location; you can view the site layout on our website. We have gone beyond state established setback requirements to ensure thoughtful siting. Under our current design, the nearest residences are at least 1,400 feet from a wind turbine with most located even further away.

Will the Project repair roads that are damaged due to construction?
Yes. Public roads used or disturbed during construction will be restored to pre-construction conditions or better, as set out in our operating agreements with the county and townships (including road use, drainage, emergency response, and decommissioning). We will coordinate closely with counties, townships, and local road authorities throughout the PSCW process and construction to address road use, haul routes, and any necessary improvements, and we will comply with all road postings. We will also work with local emergency services and school districts to coordinate schedules and any temporary road closures, with careful consideration for school bus routes, special events, and inclement weather.

What about TV signal interference?
Through the state application, the Project has analyzed local off-air stations that could potentially be affected. While this is somewhat rare, if a resident experiences interference caused by the project, we will work with them directly to resolve the issue at the expense of the Project. Project compensated solutions include upgrading an antenna or providing cable or satellite options but will be evaluated case-by-case.

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Environmental, Health, and Safety

Don't wind turbines kill eagles, birds, and bats?
Protecting wildlife is a priority, and we have a strong track record of taking this obligation seriously. We are committed to a project that we can be proud of and that achieves balanced outcomes with respect to the environment. We conduct years of field studies and work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Wisconsin DNR (WDNR) to avoid disturbance by siting turbines away from sensitive habitats. To further minimize risk, we can "curtail" (slow or stop) specific turbines during peak migration periods. We continue to monitor and adjust our operations throughout the life of the project in communication and coordination with our regulators.

Don't wind turbines use oil?
While wind turbines require some lubricants and coolants – including oil – and we manage these materials with strict adherence to state and local safety requirements. Notably, the Nordex turbine proposed for this project utilizes advanced electronic controls rather than traditional hydraulics, significantly reducing the amount of fluids needed compared to older models.

What are Electromagnetic Fields?
Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs) are invisible lines of force found anywhere electricity is present – from cell phones to household appliances. The EMF exposure from a wind farm is actually much lower than what you experience in everyday life. Because our collection lines are shielded and buried underground, the electric field at the surface is predicted to be nearly zero.

Is there danger of static electricity from the wind turbines traveling through the ground and affecting cows and their milk production?
We understand some landowners may feel this is a concern, as stray voltage is a complex topic. Alliant Energy continues to navigate stray voltage concerns and works diligently to avoid issues for our communities that we serve. This project will be no different. *The proposed wind project will be directly connected to the transmission grid and Alliant anticipates no additional stray voltage issues resulting from the wind farm.* Additionally, Alliant Energy will perform pre- and post-construction stray voltage testing at all dairy and confined animal operations within 0.5 miles of project facilities. More information regarding stray voltage as well as how to book a free on-site consultation with Alliant Energy Agricultural Representatives can be found at **https://www.alliantenergy.com/safety/farm-safety/stray-voltage**.

Columbia Wind does not anticipate issues regarding induced (stray) voltage as a result of the Project.

Can a turbine cause health issues?
There are decades of credible peer-reviewed studies that show there is no correlation between wind turbines and health. Wind farms operate all over the world, including thousands of wind farms in the United States. Modern turbines are designed to be quieter, more efficient, and with better controls than older models – technology that continuously gets better and has safety in mind through its engineering.

Is groundwater a concern?
We take such concerns very seriously, however, issues like this are not common with wind projects in the United States.

Many specific environmental concerns were evaluated within our application – including soils, plants and wildlife, groundwater, land use, and a variety of other environmental topics. But, we are still working with permitting authorities, including state regulators, to ensure the project adheres to the best practices and standards to protect land and those around it, including private wells.