



OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 2018-002
DATE January 24, 2018

AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE MAINE WIND ENERGY ADVISORY COMMISSION

WHEREAS, Tourism is a major industry in the State of Maine, attracting over 35 million visitors in 2016 who spent nearly \$6 billion; and

WHEREAS, the scenic vistas and pristine waters of Western Maine, our coast and coastal islands, and our significant avian migratory pathways (the Areas) attract significant tourism to the State; and

WHEREAS, the visitors to the Areas in Maine are known to come to enjoy outdoor and nature oriented activities; and

WHEREAS, noise and vibration caused by wind turbines are well known effects of the turbines; and

WHEREAS, the sight of wind turbines can affect property values; and

WHEREAS, wildlife will be affected by the wind turbines; and

WHEREAS, the future estimated decommissioning costs of wind turbines are uncertain; and

WHEREAS, any decision regarding siting wind turbines in the Areas will have long term consequences to the tourism industry; and,

WHEREAS, the benefit from wind turbines are therefore uncertain.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Paul R. LePage, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby establish the **Maine Wind Energy Advisory Commission** (“the Commission”) for the purposes of (1) Studying the economic impact of potential Wind turbines in the Areas, (2) Assessing the economic impact of expedited wind rules and procedures, (3) Assessing and developing recommendations in a written report. I order that no permits related to wind turbines are issued in the Areas until the report is issued in writing. I also order that Pursuant to Title 1, section 402, subsection 2, paragraph F, the meetings of this Review Panel are not “public proceedings” subject to Maine’s Freedom of Access Act.

The Commission

The Commission shall be comprised of no less than 11 and no more than 15 representatives from state agencies and other entities that have substantial responsibilities and/or interests in the siting of wind turbines in Western Maine, including:

- The Director of the Governor's Energy Office or Designee(s) from the Governor's Energy Office, which shall serve as the lead agency for the proceedings and activities of the Commission.
- The Commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development or Designee(s) from the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development.
- The Commissioner of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection or Designee(s) from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection.
- A representative from the Public Utilities Commission.
- Other public and private sector entities and individuals, including members of the Maine Legislature, municipal officers, advocacy organizations and businesses, per appointment by the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development.

Duties of the Commission

The Commission Shall:

- Act as the State's official review and advisory body for the assessment of economic impact likely to occur by siting wind turbines in the Areas.
- Assess the economic impact of wind power to Maine's electricity rate structure.
- Conduct its work in a manner that will maximize interagency coordination.
- Monitor compliance with federal and state environmental laws.
- Consider the economic impact of previously sited wind turbines in Maine.
- Develop and propose policies regulating the future deployment and operation of wind turbines in the Areas.
- Act as the State's distributor of official public information, and for development of educational resources, related to wind turbines in the Areas.
- Provide comment on federal policies and reports about wind turbine deployment and operation, as needed.
- Establish goals and time frames for the Commission's work.

Recommendations of the Commission will be formalized upon the approval of an Executive Committee comprised of the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, the Commissioner of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and the Director of the Governor's Energy Office, in consultation with other officials as appropriate to the proposed project.

The Commission shall deliver a report summarizing its recommendations to the Governor when finished.

I direct that the agencies involved undertake this work within their existing resources and budgets.

The Effective date of the Executive Order is January 24, 2018.


Paul R. LePage, Governor

Governor LePage Issues Executive Order Establishing the Maine Wind Energy Advisory Commission

For Immediate Release: Wednesday, January 24, 2018

Contact: Julie Rabinowitz, Press Secretary, 207-287-2531

AUGUSTA – Governor Paul R. LePage has issued Executive Order 2018-002, “An Order Establishing the Maine Wind Energy Advisory Commission.”

“I am placing a moratorium on issuing any new permits related to wind turbines until this Commission studies the economic impact that such development would have on tourism in Maine,” said Governor LePage. “Tourism, especially returning visitors, is a major driver for the Maine economy. We cannot afford to damage our natural assets in ways that would deter visitors from returning to Maine.”

In 2016, Maine attracted more than 35 million visitors who spent nearly \$6 billion, numbers that were surpassed in 2017.

The Governor stated, “While out-of-state interests are eager to exploit our western mountains in order to serve their political agendas, we must act judiciously to protect our natural beauty. I urge the commission to take the time they need to develop the right policies that balance tourism, the needs of the communities, the environment and development.”

Membership of the commission will include representatives from state agencies and other entities that have substantial responsibilities and/or interests in the siting of wind turbines in Western Maine, including members of the Legislature, municipal officers, advocacy organizations and businesses.

As part of its charge, the commission will monitor compliance with federal and state environmental law, consider the economic impact of previously sited wind turbines in Maine, and develop and propose policies regulating the future deployment and operation of wind turbines in Western Maine.

In addition to today’s executive order, Governor LePage announced his intention to introduce legislation to amend the laws governing expedited permitting for wind energy development.

“Current law is too ambitious and overly permissive in areas of the state where we must protect our scenic vistas. While I believe that some expedited permitting for wind is appropriate, my bill will implement constraints on where expedited development can occur to protect our tourism-based economy,” he said.