



## Department of Energy

Golden Field Office  
15013 Denver West Parkway  
Golden, Colorado 80401

January 15, 2015

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Scoping – Seneca Nation of Indians (SNI) Wind Turbine Project, Chautauqua County, Irving, New York (DOE/EA-2004)

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and Seneca Nation of Indians (SNI) are proposing to authorize the expenditure of federal funds for a project on SNI-owned sovereign land in Erie County, New York. The Seneca Energy Corporation, chartered and owned by the Seneca Nation of Indians, is proposing to construct one wind turbine to generate electricity on Tribal common lands in the Cattaraugus Territory, New York. The turbine will be located near Lucky Lane and Gil Lay Arena. The proposed project would include construction and installation of: one turbine and foundation, an associated access road extension, and an electrical substation. The wind turbine would be able to produce approximately 1.7-megawatts of electricity, which would be used to offset power use by Seneca Nation administrative buildings which will be credited back to Cattaraugus Territory Residents electricity users. The project would be beneficial to the country's energy objectives by providing electricity from a renewable resource and reducing pollutant emissions. It would also allow Seneca Energy to generate an energy credit and therefore a lower per kwh energy cost that will be passed along to SNI residents to create a rate parity between SNI territories. The attached Project Description provides additional information on the proposed project.

Pursuant to the requirements of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.; NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 to 1508), and DOE NEPA implementing procedures (10 CFR Part 1021), DOE, with the SNI as a partner, is preparing a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to:

- Identify any adverse environmental effects and potential associated mitigation measures should this proposed action be implemented;
- Evaluate viable alternatives to the proposed action, including a no action alternative;
- Describe the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity;
- Characterize any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved should this proposed action be implemented; and

- Analyze past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions to evaluate potential cumulative impacts.

### **Probable Environmental Effects/Issues Scoped for the Environmental Assessment**

The EA will describe and analyze potential impacts on the environment that would be caused by the project and, as applicable, will identify possible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate those impacts. At a minimum, the EA will evaluate the impacts that could affect:

- Land Use;
- Air Quality;
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Water Resources;
- Waste Management and Hazardous Materials;
- Noise;
- Infrastructure;
- Traffic and Transportation;
- Aesthetics and Visual Resources;
- Health and Safety;
- Socioeconomics; and
- Environmental Justice.

### **Development of a Reasonable Range of Alternatives**

NEPA requires DOE to consider a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed action during an environmental review. The definition of alternatives is governed by the “rule of reason”; that is, an EA must consider a reasonable range of options that could accomplish the agency’s purpose and need and reduce environmental effects. Reasonable alternatives are those that could be feasible based on environmental, technical, and economic factors. The No-Action Alternative will be addressed as well.

### **Public Scoping**

DOE invites the public; federal, state, and local agencies; and American Indian Tribes to identify issues they feel DOE should consider in the EA. DOE will post this letter, as well as the draft EA, when available, in the DOE Golden Field Office online reading room:

<http://energy.gov/eere/golden-reading-room-environmental-assessments>

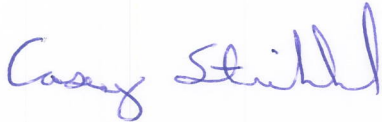
The DOE Golden Field Office welcomes your input throughout the NEPA process. To ensure DOE receives your comments in time for consideration in the draft EA, please provide them on or before February 4, 2015, to:

Mr. Casey Strickland, NEPA Document Manager  
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15013 Denver West Parkway

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Email: gonepa@ee.doe.gov  
Fax: 720-356-1350

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Casey Strickland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Casey Strickland  
NEPA Document Manager

Attachment: Project Description and Location

## **ATTACHMENT – PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION**

The Seneca Nation of Indians (SNI) intends to install and operate one 1.7 MW wind turbine on SNI-owned sovereign lands in Erie County, New York. Using industry standard wind resource assessment tools from AWS TruePower and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) and existing anemometry at the site, we have determined an available wind resource of 7.13 meters per second at a hub height of 60 meters for this site. SNI, with its partners Utility Reduction Specialists, Inc. (URS), New West Technologies, LLC (New West), and Sustainable Energy Developments, Inc. (SED), will install one 1.7 MW turbine which will produce approximately 5,000,000 kWh of electricity, per year.



**Figure 1. Aerial view of proposed project location.**





Figure 2. Preliminary development plan

