

Draft
Environmental Impact Statement
for the Noble Ball Hill Windpark

Towns of Villenova and Hanover
Chautauqua County, New York

Volume I

September 2008

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AADT	average annual daily traffic
agl	above ground level
AM	amplitude modulation
AMSL	above mean sea level
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
APE	area of potential effect
arl	above radar level
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers
ATV	all-terrain vehicle
AV	assessed value
BBA	Breeding Bird Atlas
BBRA	Bird and Bat Risk Assessment
BCI	Bat Conservation International
BMP	best management practice
BOS	Buffalo Ornithological Society
BTS	bulk transmission system
BWEC	Bats and Wind Energy Cooperative
CBC	Christmas Bird Count
CO ₂	carbon dioxide
CPCN	Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity
cy	cubic yards
°F	degrees Fahrenheit
dBA	A-weighted decibel level
dBC	C-weighted decibel level
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DHS	(United States) Department of Homeland Security
DOD	(United States) Department of Defense
DOE	(United States) Department of Energy
DSB	direct satellite broadcast
E & E	Ecology and Environment, Inc.
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
ECL	Environmental Conservation Law
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMI	electromagnetic interference
EMR	Experience Modification Rate
EPA	(United States) Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FCC	Federal Communications Commission

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms (cont.)

FM	frequency modulation
GAO	(United States) Government Accountability Office
GE	General Electric
GHz	gigahertz
GWh	gigawatthour
Hessler	Hessler Associates, Inc.
HMANA	Hawk Migration Association of North America
HSP	Health and Safety Plan
HSE	health, safety, and environment
HSEMS	Health, Safety, and Environmental Management System
Hz	Hertz
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IRAC	Interdepartment Radio Advisory Committee
ISMP	Invasive Species Management Plan
KLW	KLW Group of Buffalo, New York
km	kilometers
km/hr	kilometers per hour
kV	kilovolt
kWh	kilowatt hour
Leq	equivalent sound level
LMR	land mobile radio
$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	micrograms per cubic meter
m/s	meters per second
MDS	map documented structures
MHz	megahertz
MLA	Mechanical Load Analysis
mph	miles per hour
MSDS	material safety data sheet
MTS	modular tower system
MW	megawatt
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEC	National Electric Code
NEPNOC	Noble Environmental Power National Operations Center
NFPA	National Fire Protection Agency
NHP	(New York State) Natural Heritage Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NM	nautical mile
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Noble	Noble Ball Hill Windpark, LLC
NOI	Notice of Intent
NO _x	nitrogen oxides
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NRE	National Register Eligible
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRC	National Research Council
NRCS	National Resource Conservation Service
NRL	National Register Listed

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms (cont.)

NTIA	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
NWCC	National Wind Coordinating Committee
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
NYCRR	New York Code of Rules and Regulations
NYISO	New York Independent System Operator
NYPA	New York Power Authority
NYS	New York State
NYSDAM	New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets
NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
NYSDOT	New York State Department of Transportation
NYSERDA	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority
NYSHPO	New York State Historic Preservation Office
O ₃	ozone
OPGW	optical ground wire
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OS/OW	oversize/overweight
O&M	operation and maintenance
Panamerican	Panamerican Consultants, Inc.
Pb	lead
PCS	personal communication system
PILOT	payments in lieu of taxes
PM	particulate matter
PSC	Public Service Commission
ROW	right-of-way
RPS	Renewable Portfolio Standard
Saratoga	Saratoga Associates, Landscape Architects, Architects, Engineers, and Planners, P.C.
SCADA	supervisory control and data acquisition
SEQRA	New York State Environmental Quality Review Act
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SPDES	State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
SPL	sound pressure level
SRIS	System Reliability Impact Study
SSURGO	Soil Survey Geographic
SUNY	State University of New York
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
USACE	United States Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
VRA	Visual Resources Assessment
WECS	Wind Energy Conversion Systems
WEST	Western EcoSystems Technology, Inc.
WMA	wildlife management area
WNS	white nose syndrome
Woodlot	Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.
ZVI	zone of visual influence

Executive Summary

ES 1 Introduction and Project Description

This Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) describes the potential impacts and mitigation associated with the construction and operation of the proposed Noble Ball Hill Windpark (the Project). The Windpark will be located in the Towns of Villenova and Hanover, Chautauqua County, New York, and will produce approximately up to 90.0 megawatts (MW) of power from a renewable resource. The Project will consist of the following:

- Installation and operation of 60 1.5-MW wind turbines (49 turbines will be located in the Town of Villenova and 11 in the Town of Hanover) within an approximately 13,658-acre Project Area;
- Construction and use of approximately 16 miles of new access roads (13 in the Town of Villenova and three in the Town of Hanover) that will connect each wind turbine to a Town or County roadway;
- Construction and use of an electrical collection system consisting of approximately 23.8 miles of underground lines (18.7 miles in the Town of Villenova and 5.1 in the Town of Hanover) and 174 feet of overhead lines (Town of Villenova). Where possible, lines will be installed along the new access roads and existing roads. Approximately 8.5 miles will be installed within new right-of-way (ROW) over private lands (7.3 miles in the Town of Villenova and 1.2 miles in the Town of Hanover);
- Construction and use of a new substation (Hanover substation) within the Project Area in the Town of Hanover that will tie into a new 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The substation footprint will be approximately 200 by 300 feet. The substation will be located on and have direct access to Hurlbert Road;
- Construction and use of a switchyard within the Project Area in the Town of Hanover. The switchyard footprint will be approximately 300 by 500 feet. The switchyard will be located on and have direct access to Bennett State Road (County Route 85);

- Construction and use of a 6-mile overhead 115-kV transmission line, sited entirely within the Town of Hanover to transfer the energy from the new substation to the new switchyard. The proposed switchyard will provide connection to existing 230-kV National Grid transmission line which provides access to the grid;
- Use of 28 acres on-site for equipment laydown areas to provide storage for materials, such as overhead poles, rods, ring forms, and other construction materials. The on-site laydown areas will also provide space for Noble and its contractors' construction trailers and parking for construction crews who will be bused to the work sites; and
- Construction and use of an operations and maintenance (O&M) facility on approximately 5 acres within the Project Area. The O&M building footprint will be approximately 50 feet by 100 feet.

A petition for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) will be filed for the Project, pursuant to Section 68 of the New York State (NYS) Public Service Law.

ES 2 Project Alternatives

During Project design, Noble considered alternative Project sizes, turbine technologies, Project location and road and interconnect designs, as well as a no-build alternative. The Project Site was selected through a systematic process that considered:

- Location of wind resources in NYS;
- Availability of existing roads and utility interconnections with adequate capacity in proximity to the locations with the most promising wind resources;
- Availability of land with landowners willing to sign easements for their property;
- Community support;
- Presence of environmental constraints including visual and noise impacts, impacts on wetlands and streams, and important wildlife habitat; and
- Presence of land use constraints including zoning and building restrictions and landowner restrictions.

ES 3 Potential Project Impacts and Mitigation

Resource-specific impacts that may potentially be associated with the Project were evaluated during the DEIS process. Existing conditions were evaluated relative to critical environmental resources, communication signals, traffic and transportation, land use, socioeconomics, and cultural resources. When potential im-

pacts were identified, every effort was made to avoid them through modifications to the Project design. When impacts could not be avoided, they were minimized to the extent practicable and mitigation strategies were developed, if necessary. Potential impacts were evaluated with respect to the following resource/receptor areas:

Wetlands

Project facilities were sited to minimize or avoid wetland impacts to the greatest extent practicable; however, some limited disturbance to wetlands will occur. Construction of the Project will result in temporary disturbance of 15.87 acres of wetlands, of which approximately 0.33 acres will be permanently impacted by placement of fill. Approximately 0.32 acres of permanently impacted wetlands is under federal jurisdiction. Construction of the Project will result in minimal impacts to one New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) wetland associated with installation of electric utility poles. Additionally, operation of Project facilities will result in the permanent conversion of 2.67 acres of state jurisdictional forested wetland to shrub-scrub or emergent wetland due to periodic removal of woody vegetation adjacent to access roads and within collection system corridors.

For those wetland impacts that cannot be avoided, mitigation will be completed as a condition of wetland disturbance permits that will be required prior to construction. Consistent with United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and NYSDEC guidance, wetland impacts will be offset through wetland creation and/or enhancement of previously existing wetlands and the mitigation area will be hydrologically connected to waters of the United States. Noble has provided a Conceptual Wetland Mitigation Plan (see Appendix I) that takes into account the permanent and temporary loss of wetland functions and values provided by the impacted wetlands. A final mitigation plan will be developed in conjunction with NYSDEC and the USACE as part of the permitting process.

Upland Vegetation

Primary impacts on upland vegetation will include the removal of existing vegetation through minimal clearing of forested, shrub-scrub, and herbaceous vegetation as part of construction activities. Permanent impacts will include removal of upland vegetation at the turbine pedestal, crane pad, and permanent access roads. The remainder of the Project footprint will be allowed to naturally revegetate, although it will be subject to periodic removal of woody vegetation to maintain an herbaceous or scrub-shrub state, especially adjacent to access roads and within the collection system corridor.

To minimize impacts on vegetation, facilities have been sited, to the extent practicable, within previously disturbed areas, such as reverting farm fields, and along existing farm roads and areas where recent logging has occurred. Where possible, access roads and collection systems have been located within areas with minimal tree growth, such as edges of active/inactive farm fields, or collocated with existing logging roads. Where construction activities will require the removal of any

trees of economic value, landowners will be compensated in accordance with their individual easement agreements.

Wildlife

No significant impacts to wildlife species are expected as a result of construction or operation of the Project. Most species present within the Project Area are expected to avoid areas during active construction periods. Because only limited use of the Project Area is anticipated by endangered, threatened, and special concern species, no impacts are expected as a result of construction or operation of the Project. Indirect impacts on wildlife will occur as a result of habitat alteration. The indirect loss of habitat will be minimal as compared to available habitat in the Project Area. Impacts on fish and wildlife will be minimized through the implementation of best management practices (BMPs) to stabilize the ground surface and allow for successful revegetation following construction of the Project.

The impacts to habitat are consistent with activities and conditions that regularly occur throughout the Project Area, such as ground disturbance, mowing of vegetation, access road use associated with farming activities, and tree removal and access road use associated with logging activities. No mitigation is proposed.

Birds and Bats

Construction-related activities (e.g., clearing for road construction, infrastructure construction, equipment noise, and increased vehicle traffic) can potentially impact birds and bats. Displacement from habitat is the primary concern with construction-related impacts. However, potential impacts from construction are generally only temporary in nature. If construction takes place in suitable nesting habitat for endangered or threatened species in the spring to early summer – during breeding season – the work area will be surveyed by an environmental monitor in advance of construction. With implementation of monitoring activities, no significant adverse impacts from construction on threatened or endangered species are anticipated.

Operation of wind turbines can potentially impact birds and bats through collisions with rotors and towers, displacement from habitat, or influence on migration, etc. There is a low risk of any substantial negative impact on habitat through loss, degradation, or displacement of breeding birds. No significant adverse impacts on breeding bird populations are anticipated from operation of the Project. Collisions are typically the primary concern with operation-related impacts. Potential impacts can vary among different bird and bat populations and groups. It is likely that nocturnal migrant passerines will make up the majority of bird kills. However, the potential mortality risk to migrant passerines is considered low-to-moderate based on the Project location, the passage rate and altitude data from the radar study (and other regional radar studies), and the avoidance behavior of passerines typically exhibited at wind energy facilities. It is anticipated that the bird fatality rates for the Project will be within the range of the National Wind Coordinating Committee (NWCC) eastern average and the 2006 Maple Ridge post-construction bird fatality results. This prediction is based on the results of the

bird studies, literature review, and because there are no features in the Project Area that attract or concentrate large numbers of migrating birds. Consequently, no biologically significant adverse impacts are anticipated for any species.

It is anticipated that bat fatality rates for the Project will be within the range of the NWCC national average and the 2006 Maple Ridge post-construction weekly bat fatality results. This prediction is based on the results of the bat studies that do not show an abundance of migratory bats and because there are no features in the Project Area that attract or concentrate large numbers of bats; however, post-construction mortality is often unpredictable. Any impacts will likely be distributed among several species.

The potential for significant bird and bat impacts was taken into account in the siting of the Project. Impacts will be further minimized through the use of turbines equipped with slow-blinking lights to reduce the potential attraction to nocturnally migrating birds under adverse weather conditions. Furthermore, modern turbines (i.e., solid tubular structures) will be installed that are designed to prevent birds from perching or nesting on them. No guy wires will be required for these turbines.

Post-construction mortality monitoring will be implemented by Noble to evaluate the actual impacts of the Project on birds and bats. Based on real-time, site-specific data collected during post-construction mortality monitoring, Noble will coordinate closely with NYSDEC to identify and assess potential mitigation strategies that can be implemented to reduce potentially significant adverse impacts, if any. This management approach will allow mitigation measures to be developed/modified during the course of Windpark operation that are responsive to site-specific conditions and to the growing and evolving database of information regarding bird/bat interactions with turbines.

Agricultural Lands

Potential permanent impacts of the Project on agricultural lands include the loss, by conversion to non-agricultural uses, of prime farmland soils or soils of statewide importance. The Project facilities will impact approximately 13.5 acres of prime farmland (8.5 in Villenova and five in Hanover) and 24 acres of soils of statewide importance (19.5 in Villenova and 4.5 in Hanover). This is significantly less than 1% of those soils in Chautauqua County and less than 0.5% of the soils in the Project Area. Other impacts, such as topsoil mixing, erosion and sedimentation, introduction of stones and rocks on and into surface soils, and soil compaction will be minimized through mitigation measures including development and implementation of BMPs and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Impacts to agricultural lands will be minimized by restricting Project equipment to the construction ROW. Overall the Project should benefit the agricultural landowners who have elected to have Project facilities located on their land. The minimal loss of productive agricultural land will be offset by the financial benefits the landowners will obtain from payments they will receive from Noble for their participation in the Project. In some instances these payments

may help to keep smaller farming operations viable and agricultural land being sold off for non agricultural uses.

Turbines located on active farms were sited, to the extent practicable, to be consistent with the Towns' design standards for agricultural mitigation set forth the local laws and with New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) siting recommendations and guidelines. Input from the landowners was also considered to avoid or minimize impacts to current and future farm operations. To the extent practicable, roads and interconnects were located on the edge of agricultural land to minimize impact on agricultural operations. Underground collection lines located away from access roadways will be buried at an appropriate depth to further minimize impacts to farming practices.

Forested Lands

The impacts to forestland are considered permanent because the clearing and the periodic maintenance to control woody vegetation surrounding the turbines, access roads, and electrical collection lines will result in the permanent conversion of forestland to other vegetative communities (i.e., successional shrubland, old field).

In forested areas, facilities have been sited, to the extent practicable, within previously disturbed areas, such as along existing logging roads and areas where recent logging has occurred. This is intended to minimize the clear cutting of trees. Where the removal of any trees of economic value is necessary, landowners will be compensated based on their individual easement agreements. Road and collection line corridors located within forested areas will be periodically maintained to prevent reestablishment of trees to provide adequate overhead clearance for safe access, leaving these corridors in an herbaceous or successional shrubland state.

Visual Resources

Based on an evaluation of the aesthetic resources, land uses, potential users and their activities, and visual simulations, it is apparent that the Project will change the visible landscape of the region and create a distinct visual aspect. The turbines will be unique and prominent visible features of the landscape from many locations. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-required lighting on the turbines will be visible from many viewpoints within the Project Area. Shadows from the turbines will fall on some residences.

To minimize visual impacts, towers will be tubular style to minimize textural contrast; white or off-white, as per FAA guidelines; and where specifications permit, will have non-specular paint to minimize reflected glare. Turbines will maintain a minimum setback from residential structures. Such separation of uses assures maximum screening benefit of existing woodland vegetation, where such exists, and minimizes the potential extended duration shadow flicker on nearby residences. Mitigation measures will be taken on a case-by-case basis where shadow flicker or other adverse visual impacts pose a significant problem for a landowner in accordance with the Complaint Resolution Process. A Historic Resource Im-

pacts Plan has been developed as indirect mitigation to offset visual impacts on potentially historic structures.

Sound

Noise from construction activities associated with the Project is likely to temporarily constitute a moderate unavoidable impact at some homes in the Project Area. Because construction activities will move from place to place around the Project Site, it is unlikely that there will be significant impacts at any single receptor for an extended period of time. The predicted sound pressure levels indicate that operational Project noise might be audible at homes in the vicinity of the Project, but the Project will comply with the local noise requirements for wind farms. Construction activities will generally occur between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. in order to minimize and avoid unnecessary impacts to the community from construction noise.

Transportation

Traffic associated with the construction of the Project will consist of delivery vehicles for turbine components, materials associated with turbine site construction and assembly, and personal vehicles for workers. Delivery vehicles will range in size from oversized load tractor-trailers (used to deliver tower sections, turbine nacelle, rotor blades, and cranes) to smaller vehicles, such as dump trucks, concrete trucks, fuel delivery trucks, mechanics vans, and pickup trucks. Personnel vehicles will consist of automobiles and light trucks. Some improvements to local roads and expansion of intersection will be required to facilitate the turning radii of oversize/overweight vehicles. Oversized construction vehicles could cause minor delays, but these are unlikely to be significant, given the relatively low traffic volume.

Construction vehicle traffic of construction personnel and non-restricted loads will generally be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Noble will enter into road-use agreements with the Towns that will designate approved construction transportation routes and commit the cost of both improvements and repairs to these routes to Noble's account. The process of creating a road use agreement will enable the Towns and municipalities' plans for scheduled paving and resurfacing to be coordinated with improvements and repairs by Noble.

Socioeconomics

Project construction may have short-term impacts on local lodging. The Project is not expected to have a long-term impact on housing and population in the region. The sales data for existing wind farm markets indicate there is no influence on property values attributed to wind farm construction. Average sale prices have, on the whole, increased, indicating that the existence of wind farms has not diminished real property values.

Construction of the Project will create an increase in local economic activity, including purchases of thousands of room-nights at local motels/hotels, automotive fuel, meals, and other items. The Project will extensively utilize and support pro-

viders of local services, suppliers, and area manufacturers during construction and operation of the Project.

Noble anticipates entering into a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) agreement for the Project with Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency, as well as Host Community Agreements under which annual payments will be made to the Towns of Villenova and Hanover for local needs. These payments will result in a significant increase in local revenue for the taxing authorities.

Cultural Resources

No prehistoric or historic archaeological sites were identified during the site investigations; as such, no archaeological resources will be impacted by construction or operation of the Project. In the event of an unanticipated discovery of archaeological resources during construction, Noble will stop work immediately in the vicinity of the find and contact the New York State Historic Preservation Office (NYSHPO).

The Project will not directly impact architectural resources (i.e., demolition of any National Register Eligible [NRE] buildings). While there is some potential for visual and noise impacts to structures potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) due to construction activities, it is unlikely that these impacts will be significant due to their temporary nature. Operation of the Project will have a visual effect on 167 properties located within the visual area of potential effect (APE): none that are listed, nine that are eligible, and 158 that are potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP.

Because NRE properties are within the visual APE, indirect mitigation for visual impacts will be required. Noble has developed a Historic Resource Impacts Mitigation Plan that identifies specific strategies that can help preserve historical resources in the affected communities and make them accessible to local residents and visitors. The final mitigation plan will be approved by the NYSHPO prior to construction.

ES 4 Cumulative Impacts

An analysis was conducted to determine whether the potential cumulative impacts that may arise from interactions between the impacts of the Project and the impacts of one other proposed wind power project in the area are significant. The construction of multiple wind power projects will result in localized impacts to wildlife, wetlands, agricultural lands and forest lands; however, neither the individual Project impacts nor the cumulative impact from other proposed projects are expected to be significant. Other proposed projects analyzed for potential cumulative impacts include the existing Steel Winds project in Lackawanna (Erie County), Horizon's New Grange and Pomfret windfarms in the neighboring Towns of Arkwright and Pomfret in Chautauqua County and Babcock & Brown's proposed Ripley-Westfield and State Line Projects. Short-term, cumulative impacts on noise and transportation may result if the Projects are constructed during the same time period; however, these impacts are expected to be temporary. The

potential for slight long-term increases in cumulative visual impacts at limited locations in the region, including historic properties, and risks to birds and bats were also identified. None of these impacts were determined to be significant. Cumulatively, construction and operation of the wind power projects will have significant long-term beneficial effects on the use and conservation of energy resources.

ES 5 Project Benefits

The Noble Ball Hill Windpark will generate electricity, using no fuels or water and with zero emissions or waste discharge, and provide it to the New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) grid using wind, a renewable resource. The Project will have capacity sufficient to generate approximately 90.0 MW of power that will help to meet New York State's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) and fill the need for a more diverse national energy portfolio that would include a higher percentage of energy generated while utilizing renewable resources.

Local economic benefits of the Project will include:

- Temporary and permanent employment;
- Increased commerce in the Town from spending by Project employees, suppliers, easement holders, and local merchants;
- An increased flow of revenue to the County, Towns, and school districts through PILOT payments and other municipal payments;
- An increased flow of revenue to landowners through easement agreements; and
- Increased economic diversification.

Construction of the Project will result in the direct employment of up to 185 electrical workers, crane operators, equipment operators, carpenters, and other construction workers (with a total estimated payroll and benefits of \$7.7 million), and create 200 additional direct, indirect, and induced jobs countywide (with a total estimated payroll and benefits of \$5.2 million). A significant percentage of the construction workers employed during the construction period will be hired from within the local community to the extent that qualified workers are available. Personnel specially trained in specific procedures for wind turbine construction will be brought in and temporarily housed in the area during the construction phase of the Project.

During plant operation, the Project will employ approximately eight workers: skilled operators (six), management (one), and administrative personnel (one), with a total estimated payroll and benefits of \$450,000 and create an estimated 16 more direct, indirect, and induced jobs countywide (with a total estimated payroll and benefits of \$439,000). To the extent practicable, local labor will be used to

fill these positions to maximize the benefit to the local community. It is anticipated that individuals in the local community would be trained to complete the necessary tasks, and current residents would fill the majority of these jobs. The exception would be any specialized wind farm managers where an individual would need to be brought to the Project Area if there was no one qualified within the community. This, or any, increase in the local population would be negligible.

The Project will spend a total of about \$26.9 million countywide during construction. Total economic benefits during construction are estimated at \$42.7 million, including payrolls, supplies, materials, hotel stays, meals, and economic multiplier effects. During plant operation, the Project will spend an estimated \$1.7 million annually, exclusive of taxes. Total annual economic benefits during operation are estimated at about \$3.1 million (including PILOT payments) including payrolls, supplies, materials, Windpark easement payments, and economic multiplier effects. Total countywide economic benefits, based upon regional multipliers applied to direct Project expenditures in original capital investment and ongoing operational expense, are estimated to be about \$128 million over 20 years.

The Project will extensively utilize and support providers of local services, suppliers, and area manufacturers during both construction and operation. In addition, the PILOT payments and Host Community Agreement payments made by Noble to both Towns and other taxing authorities will result in significant increase in local revenue for the taxing authorities.

The Project will assist in the revitalization of the local economy by providing steady income through easement payments to participating landowners. Most of the landowners are farmers, and the additional income from these payments is expected to help stabilize their income and provide some relief from the cash-flow fluctuations that are inherent in the agricultural industry.

Additional value to the local economy will result from increased diversification of the county and state economic bases. Economic diversification ensures greater stability of the economy by minimizing financial high and low cycles associated with a specific industry. This effect is particularly important in rural areas, where more goods and services are imported and more dollars leave the region.

All of the foregoing benefits will be provided without any corresponding increased burden on local schools and other public services.