

**BEFORE  
THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD**

In the Matter of the Applications of <b>Hog Creek Wind</b>	)	
<b>Farm, LLC</b> for Amendments to its Certificates to	)	
Install and Operate Wind-Powered Electric Generation	)	Case No. 16-1422-EL-BGA
Facilities in Hardin County, Ohio and Request to Merge	)	Case No. 16-1423-EL-BGA
Operating Authority for the Two Certificates	)	

**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF**

**MASON V. SORENSON**

**on behalf of**

**HOG CREEK WIND FARM, LLC**

**October 31, 2016**

1       **1. Please state your name.**

2           My name is Mason V. Sorenson.

3       **2. By whom are you employed?**

4           I am employed by Renewable Energy Systems Americas, Inc. (“RES”), the ultimate  
5           parent company of Hog Creek Wind Farm, LLC (“Hog Creek”).

6       **3. What is your business address?**

7           My business address is 330 2nd Avenue South, Suite 820, Minneapolis, Minnesota,  
8           55401.

9       **4. Please state your background.**

10          I graduated in 2007 with a BA from St. John’s University located in Minnesota. I thereafter  
11          attended William Mitchell College of Law in St. Paul Minnesota. After law school I  
12          worked for three years as a wind attorney and wind developer for Midwest Wind Finance.  
13          Subsequently I worked for Nordic Wind Power, and after that, for Rain Bird. I joined RES  
14          nearly a year ago as senior development manager. My assignment was to develop the Hog  
15          Creek wind projects.

16       **5. What has been your role in the regulatory process before the Ohio Power Siting Board**  
17       **(“Board” or “OPSB”)?**

18          I have acted as the project manager for development of the project areas, which I will  
19          refer to as “the project.” In addition to landowner, interconnection, and power purchase  
20          agreements, I have managed the work to obtain the Hog Creek amendments from the  
21          Ohio Power Siting Board (“Board”), as well as from all the other governmental entities  
22          that issue permits and/or authorizations for the project. I have been primarily responsible  
23          for securing the consultants who assisted the company in preparing and processing the

amendment applications before the Board as well as directing their activities. I have also been the point person with the OPSB Staff.

**6. Please indicate the purpose of your testimony today.**

The purpose of my testimony is to give some brief background about RES and its purchase of the Hog Creek Wind Farms. I also want to state that Hog Creek accepts all the recommendations of the October 18, 2016 Staff Report issued in these two cases and is prepared to implement them. I will also give some brief background about Hog Creek's plans to go forward with the wind farm that is contemplated by the two certificates and the amendments to them. As stated in both amendments, Hog Creek has requested that the two certificates be merged because Hog Creek intends to operate both project areas as one project.

**7. Please provide some general background about the purchase of Hog Creek Wind Farm, LLC.**

RES purchased the two Hog Creek projects in February 2016. The Board had approved certificates for them in 2010 and 2011, respectively and amendments to both projects were approved in 2011. During the period of the recession, a number of renewable projects nationwide had languished. The prior owners decided to exit the renewable industry and about the same time, RES was looking to increase its renewable portfolio. Fortunately, as the economy entered into a period of recovery, there was increasing demand from renewable projects, particularly in PJM region. The Hog Creek projects looked attractive to RES because they already had land secured; they had supportive communities; and the project areas were located in low wildlife risk areas. In short, they were aching to be developed. Once RES purchased the projects, the company immediately moved forward with the actions

needed to bring the projects to reality. It is an understatement to say that RES is eager to move them forward to completion.

**8. Please review the issues that the Board set for hearing?**

In its Staff Report, the Staff recommended, and the Entry of the Administrative Law Judge of October 19, 2016, confirmed, that the following five issues should be set for hearing because, in the view of the Board, they entail a substantial change in the location of all or a portion of the proposed project:

- The relocation of all the turbine footprint locations: This change was necessary based on the selection of the new turbine model, the Vestas V110-2.2 MW which results in a decrease in the 41 maximum turbines sites to a maximum of 30. Overall, the reduction in turbine sites which meet the newer statutory requirements, results in a lesser overall environmental impact.
- A modification of the location of access roads: Because the turbine locations change, the access roads also had to be relocated. The number of access roads was also reduced.
- The modification of collection lines: Just as the access road locations had to be relocated due to the change in turbine site locations, the collector lines to the turbines had to change correspondingly. The total number of miles for the collection lines was reduced by 4 miles.
- An addition of two acres to the collector substation: Though the acreage increases from one to three acres, the land impacts associated with the substation are limited to undeveloped agricultural land. The changes were made because the

RES design engineers estimate that three acres, rather than one, are needed for the substation for the combined 66 MW project.

- Additional acreage to the eastern boundary of the project area: The project was able to secure an additional approximately 345 acres for its project immediately adjacent to the project area. This additional area allows the project to site up to 30 turbines in the project area. The planned number of turbines could not have fit within the original project area, given the new statutory set-back requirements.

The Staff recommended that the Board approve all of these changes and essentially found that Hog Creek had provided the appropriate information to justify the changes. Hog Creek agrees with the Staff's conclusions and urges the Board to approve the amendments.

**9. Please address the request to merge the two Hog Creek projects.**

Because of the proximity of the two projects, the addition of the acreage, and the ability of the one substation to serve both projects, the combined projects areas can be constructed and operated as one project. Of course, Hog Creek will meet the conditions of both certificates. Thus the project would like the Board to merge the two certificates to acknowledge the fact that both projects areas are really one project and will be operated as a single unit.

**10. What are the plans for Hog Creek to complete construction and begin operation of the project?**

Hog Creek plans to begin construction this year with the excavation of turbine foundations. Its schedule anticipates completion of the project by fourth quarter of 2017. Currently RES is in negotiations with a purchaser of all the electricity produced from the project. Due to the federal tax credit law, in order for these projects to be financially

94           viable, construction needs to begin by the end of 2016. Thus it is essential that this  
95           amendment be approved by the Board as soon as possible.

96           **11. Why do you believe the stipulation should be accepted?**

97           I believe that the Stipulation meets the criteria for Board approval of stipulations. The  
98           Staff, the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation and the Applicant are the only parties in this  
99           case. Because there was complete agreement with the Staff Report recommendations  
100          filed on October 18, 2016, and a subsequent Staff modification to recommended  
101          Condition 5, it was only necessary to have the attorneys for the parties communicate by  
102          telephone and e-mails to come to agreement on the Stipulation. The Stipulation  
103          presented in this case represents the product of these communications between and  
104          among knowledgeable persons. I believe that the Stipulation represents a reasonable  
105          outcome that balances the parties' positions. The parties believe that all of the provisions  
106          in the Stipulation are in harmony with regulatory principles and practice.

107          It is my understanding that although a stipulation is not binding upon the Board, there is  
108          court precedent that the terms of a stipulation, such as is presented here, should be  
109          accorded substantial weight, especially when it is unopposed, signed by all the parties  
110          and resolves all the issues in the proceeding. It is for all these reasons that I urge the  
111          Board to approve the Stipulation.

112          **12. Do you have any additional comments?**

113          Yes, I would like to state that the Staff project manager assigned to this matter was  
114          extremely professional throughout the regulatory process and that the communication  
115          between the Applicant and the Staff was very smooth. The two original applications that

116 resulted in the two Hog Creek certificates were some of the first that were processed by  
117 the Board, in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

118 Also the communities have been very patient in waiting up to nine years for the projects  
119 to begin construction. We are concerned that any delays from herein out will not only  
120 add unnecessary costs to the project, but will discourage our landowners from believing  
121 that these projects will become a reality. Therefore, we urge the Board to act on these  
122 applications as soon as possible. The projects have met all the conditions of the law and  
123 the Board regulations and further delay will be deleterious.

124 **13. Does this conclude your testimony?**

125 Yes it does.

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the Pre-filed Testimony of Mason V. Sorenson has been served upon the following parties listed below by electronic mail, this 31<sup>th</sup> day of October 2016.



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Summary: Testimony of Mason V. Sorenson on behalf of Hog Creek Wind Farm LLC  
electronically filed by Teresa Orahoud on behalf of Sally W. Bloomfield