

The Power of the Wind: A Michigan Story

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Municipalities and corporations—including both of the state’s major electric utilities—have announced pledges or plans to significantly expand the use of renewable energy. Most of this additional renewable energy development, at least in the short-term, is expected to come from large-scale wind energy projects sited in rural areas. But such projects are increasingly being met with opposition in communities across the state. In this session, we will provide practical suggestions for how to arbitrate disagreements about wind energy and how to tell fact from fiction when it comes to wind energy development.

We’ll start by discussing how wind development works, and why every rural community in Michigan ought to be planning for wind energy (and solar, too). Then we’ll address common myths gathered from our experiences at public hearing across the state about the impacts of wind energy. These range from the benefits (or not) to schools and local governments, the impacts on property values and human health, and discuss how these might—and might not—be taken into account in zoning ordinances. We’ll also discuss how to find good, fact-based resources of information. Some of these resources are listed below.

Attendees should check out the May/June issue of Michigan Planner where we covered a range of issues related to planning for wind energy. We promise not to repeat ourselves too much. We also promise to leave plenty of time for Q&A, so please come with questions.

Resources

[MSU Land Use Guidelines](#) (provides an excellent explanation of pros and cons of alternate zoning approaches)

[Is Wind Energy Right for Your Community?](#) (A webinar with the results and recommendations from Sarah’s research)

[MSUE’s sample zoning for wind energy systems](#)

Department of Energy’s [FAQs about Wind Energy](#)

Center for Rural Affairs’ fact sheet on [property value impacts](#) and [zoning information guide](#)
NREL’s [Wind Energy Guide for County Commissioners](#)

[Summary of Conclusions of 25 Reviews of Research Literature on Wind Farms and Health](#)

LBNL [Property Value Study](#)

National Wind Coordinating Collaborative [Research on Birds and Bats](#)