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Public Utilities Commission Announces 2013 Renewable Energy Grants

The Public Utilities Commission has awarded \$3.8 million to fund ten renewable energy projects in New Hampshire. Funded by the State's Renewable Energy Fund (REF), the grants will help pay for a range of renewable energy installations, helping to reduce New Hampshire's dependence on fossil fuels and to meet the state's renewable energy goals. The grant funds will be leveraged with an additional \$29.5 million in project funds invested by the grantees.

The grants were awarded through a competitive process. The Commission issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in May 2013, and received thirty-five applications requesting a total of nearly \$21 million. Applications were evaluated and rated by a screening committee consisting of staff from the Commission, Department of Environmental Services, and the Office of Energy and Planning. Eighteen of the applicants were interviewed by the screening committee. The committee scored all of the proposals and then passed its findings on to the three PUC Commissioners, who in turn carried out their own review process and made final decisions on all grant awards. The ten grant agreements were then approved by Governor Hassan and the Executive Council.

The ten grant awards are as follows:

Fall Mountain Regional School District - \$100,000: The school district will install two high efficiency wood pellet boilers, one at Walpole Elementary School and the other at Charlestown Elementary School. Energy Efficient Investments, Inc. will purchase and install the boilers through an energy performance contract at no upfront cost to the school district and will also implement a range of energy efficiency measures through this cost neutral loan. The project is expected to displace 60,000 gallons of heating oil per year, reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 570 tons per year, and generate 1522 Class I thermal renewable energy certificates (RECs) per year. Total project cost is \$492,000.

Fiske Hydro Inc., \$225,000: Fiske Hydro, Inc. will refurbish the hydroelectric dam located on the Ashuelot River in Hinsdale, NH and increase its generating capacity from 160 kilowatts to 535 kilowatts. The project will increase electrical generation by 1,681,920 kilowatt hours per year, reduce carbon emissions by 763 tons per year, and generate 1,682 Class I RECs annually. Total project cost is \$362,000.

Historic Harrisville, Inc., \$150,000: Historic Harrisville, Inc. will install and operate a biomass boiler system consisting of three biomass boilers and a buffer tank at the Chesire Mills Complex in Harrisville, NH. The project will displace 19,000 gallons of heating oil per year, reduce carbon emissions by 180 tons a year, and generate 2291 thermal Class I RECs per year. Total project cost is \$231,185.

Holderness School, \$300,000: The Holderness School in Holderness, NH will install and operate a central biomass plant and hot water district heating system that will provide heat to the whole school, a total of 24 buildings. The grant will enable the school to add air emission controls to make the project eligible for thermal RECs. The new heating system will generate cost savings of \$320,000 per year, displace 133,000 gallons of heating oil per year, reduce carbon emissions by 1330 tons per year, and generate 4580 Class I thermal RECs annually. Total project cost is \$3,950,000.

Jericho Power LLC, \$1,000,000: Jericho Power will install and operate an 8.55 megawatt wind energy project on Jericho Mountain in Berlin, NH. The electricity will be sold through power purchase agreements to nonprofit, customer-owned electric companies, including the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative. The project will consist of three large wind turbines installed at the site of a decommissioned wind facility. The project will generate 21,600,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year, reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 9,800 tons per year, and generate 21,600 Class I RECs annually. Total project cost is \$20,048,000.

Northwoods Renewables LLC, \$125,000: Northwoods Renewables, LLC will refurbish the Golden Pond hydroelectric site in Ashland, NH and increase its capacity to 130 kilowatts by replacing inefficient and unreliable equipment. The dam ceased operation 2008 due to a generator failure. With new equipment, the dam will come back on line and will generate and sell electricity to the local utility in Ashland. The project will generate 763,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year, reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 346 tons per year, and will generate 763 Class I RECs annually. Total project cost is \$227,225.

Pierce Solar LLC, \$175,000: Pierce Solar LLC will install, operate and monitor a 192 kilowatt solar photovoltaic system on the rooftop of the Dr. Arthur and Martha Pappas Health Science and Athletic Training Center at Franklin Pierce University in Rindge, NH. Through the use of an innovative financing mechanism known as a power purchase agreement (PPA), the university will be able to reduce its electricity costs without incurring upfront capital costs, while Pierce Solar will be able to take advantage of tax credits and accelerated tax depreciation. The project will result in costs savings to the university of \$22,000 per year, will generate 221,095 kilowatt hours per year of electricity, and will produce 221 Class II RECs annually. Total project cost is \$625,000.

Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative, \$317,890: PAREI will install a 119 kilowatt photovoltaic array at Plymouth Village Water and Sewer District's wastewater treatment plant. This project will save taxpayers more than \$17,000 per year, generate 136,000 kilowatts hours of electricity per year, reduce carbon emissions by 62 tons per year, and will produce 136 Class II RECs annually. Total project cost is \$427,980.

Water Street Solar 1, LLC, \$1,220,000: Water Street Solar 1, LLC will install and operate a 947 kilowatt solar photovoltaic (PV) system at the Town of Peterborough's wastewater treatment facility. The panels will be ground-mounted in a field that formerly served as a holding pond. This system will be the largest solar installation in New Hampshire. The town will purchase power from the PV system at a reduced rate through a power purchase agreement, with no upfront capital costs. The project will generate 1,150,520 kilowatt hours per year, reduce carbon emissions by 522 tons per year, and will produce 1150 Class II RECs annually. Total project cost is \$2,626,495.

Xylogen LLC, \$200,000: Xylogen, LLC will install and own a central biomass heating plant to provide for the heat and hot water needs of seven buildings on the High Mowing School's campus in Wilton, NH. Thirteen boilers will be replaced. Xylogen will finance the project and share cost savings with the school. The new heating system will displace 21,000 gallons of heating oil and 9,800 gallons of propane per year, reduce carbon emissions by 259 tons per year, and generate 1021 Class I thermal RECs annually. Total project cost is \$525,000.

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