

# Beech Ridge Energy

## For immediate release

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### **Local support building for Beech Ridge Wind Farm**

RUPERT, W.Va. \_ Two business groups and three communities nearby a proposed wind farm in northwestern Greenbrier County have adopted resolutions backing the project being developed by Beech Ridge Energy LLC.

The West Virginia Forestry Association filed its resolution Wednesday (April 19) with the West Virginia Public Service Commission, which is considering whether to grant Beech Ridge a siting certificate for the \$300 million, 124-turbine project. The Richwood Chamber of Commerce has also adopted a resolution favoring Beech Ridge, as have the towns of Rainelle, Rupert and Quinwood.

“We believe wind power production is an emerging industry in this state that will help support farming and forestry production efforts by making renewable resource management more economically feasible,” Dick K. Waybright, the association’s executive director, said in a letter to the commission accompanying the resolution.

“Wind energy production can enhance farming and forestry by harnessing an additional renewable resource yielding revenue to the land owner and a powerful incentive for extending and improving land management practices,” said the resolution, adopted April 12 by the association’s board of directors.

The association also challenged detractors of the wind farm who base their opposition on “viewshed.”

The association said it opposes “the taking of land either directly or through unreasonable prohibitions on the use of private land and particularly the imposition of such prohibitions based upon the assertion that a public ‘viewshed’ exists which must remain unaltered.”

Waybright told the PSC, “We support private property rights and believe that any decision against this project based on viewshed issues violates landowner property rights, especially given the fact that the landowner in this case, MeadWestvaco Corp., and (Beech Ridge) are meeting all state and federal laws in the construction and operation of wind farm projects.”

Rainelle, Richwood and Quinwood, as well as the Richwood chamber, cite as reasons for their support the expected economic impact of the project: 215 construction jobs; an annual payroll of

\$700,000 for the 20 long-term, jobs required to run and maintain the windmills; and \$400,000 in local annual property taxes for the 20-year life of the project.

Further, the Richwood chamber disputed opponents' contention the project would have a negative impact on tourism.

Public hearings will be held at the State Fairgrounds in Fairlea on April 25 and at the commission's offices in Charleston on May 10.

The Beech Ridge Wind Farm is a proposed 186-megawatt wind energy project that will be located near Rupert, West Virginia. It will be built along a few isolated ridgelines in rural northern Greenbrier County that have all been forested and/or mined and are currently managed by MeadWestvaco Corp. Beech Ridge will supply enough clean, renewable energy to satisfy the electricity demands of more than 50,000 households. Beech Ridge Energy LLC will be owned and operated on a long-term basis by Invenergy Wind LLC.

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