

Scotian WindFields – the Evolution of Community Power in Nova Scotia

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Introduction

- the concept and origin of Scotian WindFields
- community investment groups
- innovative model and the CEDIF program
- will tell the story today:
 - how the structure developed
 - lessons learned
 - future opportunities
 - policy recommendations

Two Building Blocks

- Community ownership matters
 - renewable energy leaders integrate community ownership (Germany, Denmark, Netherlands)
 - local benefits of renewable energy are enhanced by local ownership
- Nova Scotia is home to world class renewable energy resource
 - wind, tidal, solar wave
 - stronger winds than world leaders such as Germany

Nova Scotia Context is Supportive

- history of cooperative movement
- credit unions and the Antigonish movement
- Community Economic Development Investment Fund (CEDIF) program
 - only 2% of \$600 million RRSP invested in NS
 - fund is ETC and RRSP eligible

The Evolution of the Scotian Wind Fields

- idea of combining CEDIF eligible funds with renewable energy – conceived in 1999
- establishment of 8 community Wind Fields
- cover all of NS
- Boards of community directors
- independent corporations, but coordinated

The Community Wind Fields

- primary mandate to invest locally in renewable energy
- local investment is raised through share offerings
- the longest-standing Wind Fields have completed 5 share offerings and raised over \$1 million
- newer Wind Fields forming Boards and preparing for 1st share offering
- as of 2008, more than 500 families have invested in a community Wind Field

Challenges for the Community Wind Fields

- nature of electricity marketplace restricted opportunity
- low cost tendering in RPS for NSPI
- Wind Fields raising \$100,000 to \$200,000 a year in contrast to the large development requirements of \$50 million to \$100 million
- therefore, community Wind Fields shut out

SWFI is the solution

- 2007, the 7 active WindFields met
- committed to invest startup capital to form Scotian WindFields Inc
- first task – answer March 07 RFP from NSPI



Lessons Learned

- Blind pool vs active corporation
 - learning to manage with volunteer Board
 - varying levels of expertise
 - active corporation requires paid staff and associated accountability
 - the WF's discovered role as blind pool after some trial and error

Lessons Learned

- Finding their voice and role
 - some bumpy roads and some WF's did not succeed
 - found the best road to success by filling a need in the community
 - being the voice for RE in the community
 - encouraging investment
 - leading by example

Accomplishments

- NSPI Request for Proposals bid
- embedded generation
- small scale – turnkey
- expansion into solar-thermal
- advocacy and community outreach

The Future of Community Power in Nova Scotia: Technical

- Nova Scotia can meet and exceed its energy demand with renewable energy with:
 - technical innovation in storage and distribution
 - distributed generation
 - green grid and increased interconnectivity
 - NS is energy island and needs system upgrades
 - transmission lines
 - metering

The Future of Community Power in Nova Scotia: Policy

- Nova Scotia can meet and exceed its energy demand with renewable energy with:
 - net metering
 - public education
 - consumer choice – opening the market
 - Advanced Renewable Tariffs
 - project based carbon credit system

Conclusions

- Scotian WF began as ambitious experiment in community ownership and renewable energy
- volunteer governance rewarding and challenging
- CEDIF program and NS culture were helpful
- individual community WFs were stronger and able to compete when they coordinated investment into a single entity
- community owned RE is a great boon to the province
- policy needs to be instituted to encourage more

Thank you

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