7.0 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND BENEFITS

This section evaluates the potential cumulative impacts that may arise from interactions between the Project and other known development projects that are under review for approval by local regulators, have been approved for development, and/or are planned for construction in the vicinity of the Project Area. In general, a cumulative impact analysis is required under SEQRA where other projects have been specifically identified and either are part of a single plan or program, or there is a sufficient nexus of common or interactive impacts to warrant assessing such impacts together. Cumulative impacts occur when two or more individual project impacts compound or increase the extent of an impact. Cumulative impacts are most often the result of concurrent actions within the same location or in an overlapping larger impact area. These actions may vary from temporary uses associated with construction (i.e., construction traffic resulting from two or more projects being built at the same time) to more permanent impacts simultaneously affecting the same resource (i.e., cumulative visual impacts resulting from wind turbines from two or more projects within the same viewshed).

7.1 Other Development Projects

In order to perform the cumulative analysis for this DEIS, the Applicant first identified known development projects within 30 miles of the Project. In addition to researching available resources online and agency records, the Applicant contacted numerous local officials in order to identify those developments which may not be publicly documented at the time of this filing. Along with the towns of Arkwright and Pomfret and Chautauqua County, these contacts included representatives from surrounding communities such as Sheridan, Charlotte, Villanova, Hanover, and Stockton, as well as agencies like the NYSDOT and County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA). Projects in the earliest stages of development and that have not submitted any formal plans to town or county regulators were not included in the cumulative impact analysis because of the relative uncertainty of their viability, as well as the lack of sufficient information regarding their locations and construction schedules.

Additionally, other wind energy development projects were identified within a 30-mile radius of the Project Site through discussions with local regulators and a review of the most recent information available on the NYISO Interconnection Queue (NYISO 2008). The 30-mile radius around the Project Site extends into portions of Pennsylvania to the south and southwest. Nearly half of the study area overlaps Lake Erie, and even extends into Canadian waters to the north. For the purposes of this DEIS, only known projects in the study area within the State of New York were considered for the cumulative impacts analysis, which includes most of Chautauqua County, the western half of Cattaraugus County, and the southwest corner of Erie County.

Through these efforts, the Applicant has identified a number of proposed wind energy projects in various stages of development within Chautauqua County and the New York State portion of

the 30-mile radius study area. Other announced wind projects within Chautauqua County are listed in Table 7.1-1 below. Although these projects are assumed to be under development, not enough publicly available information exists yet to perform a comprehensive analysis of their cumulative impacts within the Project study area. Information about the layout of these projects, the turbines that they propose to use, the routes of their transmission interconnections, or their schedules is not currently publicly available.

Table 7.1-1. Proposed Wind Projects, Chautauqua County, New York

Project Name	Available Project Information
Noble Environmental Power, LLC – Ball Hill Windpark	NYISO request 7/21/06 for 99 MW and an interconnection into Dunkirk-Gardenville 230 kV. Proposed in service date is 2008/10. No additional information available.
Babcock & Brown, LP – Ripley-Westfield Wind	NYISO request 8/14/07 for 124.8 MW and an interconnection with Ripley Dunkirk 230 kV. Proposed in service date is 2009/12. No additional information available.
Babcock & Brown, LP – State Line Wind	NYISO request 12/20/07 for 124.8 MW and an interconnection with Ripley-Dunkirk 230 kV. Proposed in service date is 2010/12. No additional information available.

Source: NYISO 2008.

It is purely speculative at this time that one or more of these projects listed in Table 7.1-1 would complete the NYISO review; complete SEQRA review; complete state, federal, and local permitting and be constructed. However, for purposes of this DEIS, the Applicant assumes that all of these proposed projects will be approved and constructed, and provides the analysis below of potential cumulative impacts to the extent possible, considering the limited information available at this time.

7.2 Conclusions

Given the limited information available for the three proposed wind energy projects listed in Table 7.1-1, the estimated distance from the Project Site to the sites of these proposed projects ranges from 5 to 30 miles. Given these distances, cumulative impacts to area residences from noise or shadow flicker are not likely. However, cumulative impacts to local roads and bridges could be possible due to construction-related transportation activities. Such impacts would only occur if the same transportation routes were used and if construction schedules overlapped. Should this situation arise, consultation with the involved project developers would be conducted to coordinate the transportation routes to minimize the extent of the impact and assure road repair and restoration is accomplished at the appropriate time, in consultation with the affected jurisdictions.

Cumulative impacts resulting from the operation of multiple wind projects within Chautauqua County would more likely be those associated with visual resources and community character.

The actual impacts would be variable dependent upon the number of turbines, proximity to receptors, and how these turbines were situated within the landscape setting. It is unlikely, given the distance range of these potential projects that multiple turbines from multiple projects would be visible from single receptor locations. Therefore, cumulative visual impacts are considered minimal.

Additionally, any potential long-term cumulative impacts are likely to be associated with the loss of existing wetlands and wildlife habitat within the development footprint. A quantifiable account for this impact is not possible at this time given the limited information available. Should information become available to the applicant prior to the FEIS, further analysis will be conducted.

Positive cumulative impacts associated with these combined projects are related to air quality improvements through the displacement of other polluting energy sources with windpower, and better meeting the state's RPS requirements and other related federal and state energy policy goals. Additional cumulative impacts include the economic benefits to the region that may be realized by the addition of income to participating landowners, the increased number of construction and operation employment opportunities, and the monies received by the host community in the form of the PILOT agreement.