

COUNTY WIND ZONING IN ILLINOIS: 2011 SURVEY



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ADVANCE REPORT FOR IWWG ADVANCING WIND POWER IN ILLINOIS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Executive Summary

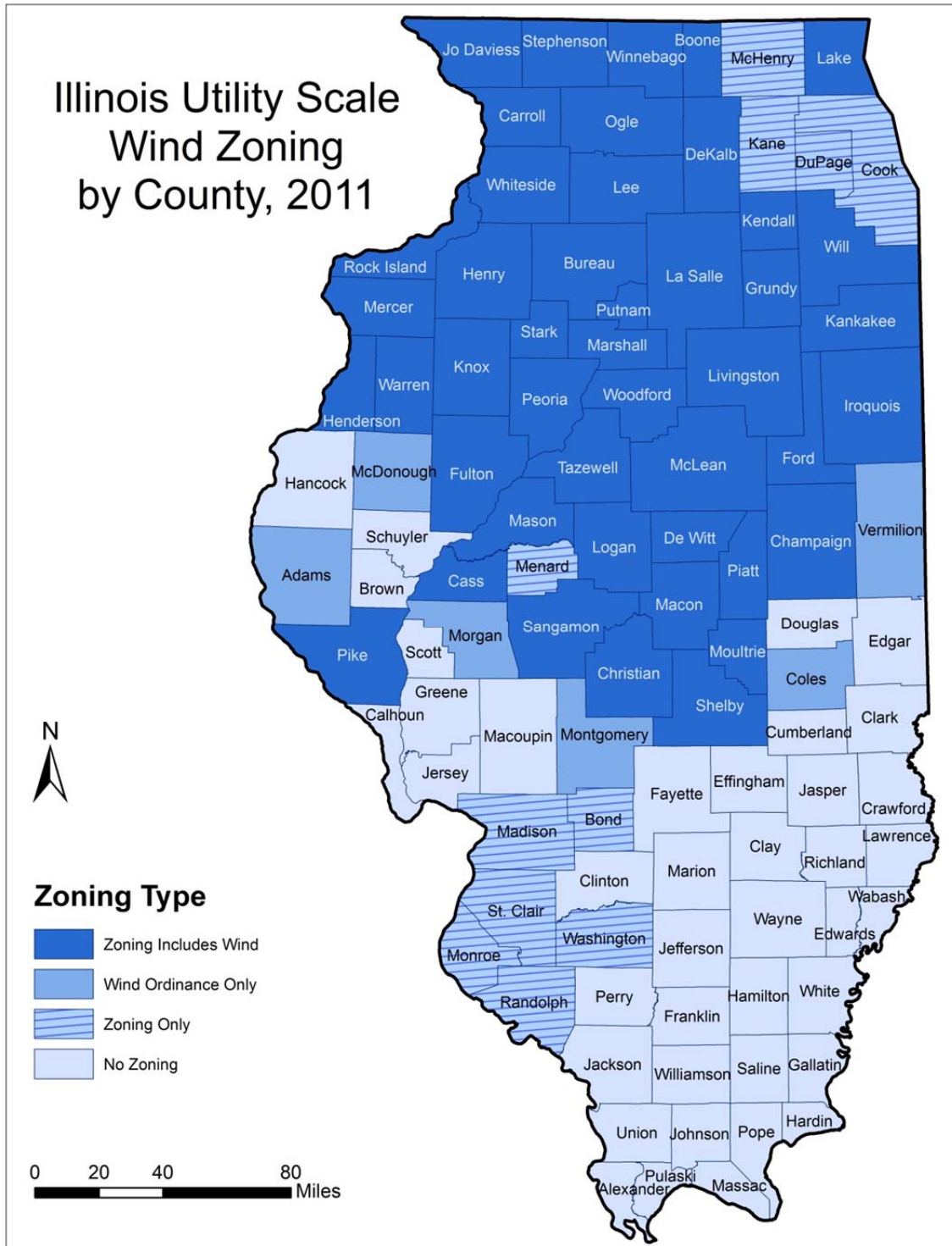
Since 2007, IIRA has conducted three complete surveys of zoning officials in all Illinois counties to determine whether explicit zoning regulations on wind turbines existed and to characterize those regulations for utility (large) and small wind systems, commonly referred to in county zoning codes as Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS). In the 2011 survey, 45 counties regulate utility scale wind as part of their zoning code and six counties have a standalone ordinance.

Counties derive their authority to place zoning regulations on wind farms from the zoning division of the Counties Code, 55 ILCS 5/5-12000 et seq., including 55 ILCS 5/5-12020, which specifically references wind farms. A recent amendment, contained in Public Act 096-0306 and effective January 1, 2010 applies typically to small wind systems in which power is used by the end user: “A county may not require a wind tower or other renewable energy system that is used exclusively by an end user to be setback more than 1.1 times the height of the renewable energy system from the end user’s property line.”

Key features of the 2011 utility scale survey are the setback and decommissioning parameters. For utility scale wind systems, the most common setback distance from property lines is 1.1x the height and the most common setback from primary structures is 1000 feet or 1.1x the height. A setback distinction between participating and non-participating landowners is an emerging characteristic, with 15 counties incorporating a different setback for each in place of a uniformly applied primary structure setback. The decommissioning requirements for utility scale wind systems have also become more detailed in specifying types of financial assurances, appraisal costs, timing and procedures.

The 2011 survey has found county wind ordinances in a state of review and modification. The results shared in this report are current as of July 2011 and every effort was made to confirm the information with county officials; however, as the wind industry continues to evolve so will county ordinances. This advance report and accompanying databases (utility scale and small scale) are provided as an overview and summary of the zoning and decommissioning requirements found in county zoning ordinances. Check IllinoisWind.org for updates to this research, and for the most accurate and up-to-date information, contact the county in question by referencing the point of contact database provided.

Illinois Utility Scale Wind Zoning by County, 2011



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Source: IIRA, 2011

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