## **103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## State of Illinois

## 2023 and 2024

## SB2892

Introduced 1/24/2024, by Sen. Sally J. Turner

## SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

55 ILCS 5/5-12020

Amends the Counties Code. In provisions about commercial wind energy facilities and commercial solar energy facilities, removes changes made by Public Act 102-1123. Provides that any provision of a county zoning ordinance pertaining to wind farms, commercial wind energy facilities, or commercial solar energy facilities that was in effect before January 27, 2023 may continue in effect notwithstanding any changes made in Public Act 102-1123 and, if applicable, any provision of a county zoning ordinance pertaining to wind farms that was in effect before August 16, 2007 may continue in effect notwithstanding the changes made in Public Act 95-203.

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AN ACT concerning local government.

# 1

# Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

Section 5. The Counties Code is amended by changing
Section 5-12020 as follows:

6 (55 ILCS 5/5-12020)

Sec. 5-12020. <u>Wind farms, electric-generating wind</u>
 <u>devices, and commercial</u> Commercial wind energy facilities and
 <u>commercial solar energy facilities</u>.

10 (a) As used in this Section:

"Commercial solar energy facility" means a "commercial 11 solar energy system" as defined in Section 10-720 of the 12 Property Tax Code. "Commercial solar energy facility" does not 13 14 mean a utility scale solar energy facility being constructed at a site that was eligible to participate in a procurement 15 16 event conducted by the Illinois Power Agency pursuant to subsection (c 5) of Section 1 75 of the Illinois Power Agency 17 Act. 18

19 "Commercial wind energy facility" means a wind energy 20 conversion facility of equal or greater than 500 kilowatts in 21 total nameplate generating capacity. "Commercial wind energy 22 facility" includes a wind energy conversion facility seeking 23 an extension of a permit to construct granted by a county or

1 municipality before January 27, 2023 (the effective date of 2 Public Act 102-1123).

"Facility owner" means (i) a person with a direct 3 ownership interest in a commercial wind energy facility or a 4 5 commercial solar energy facility, or both, regardless of whether the person is involved in acquiring the necessary 6 rights, permits, and approvals or otherwise planning for the 7 construction and operation of the facility, and (ii) at the 8 9 time the facility is being developed, a person who is acting as 10 a developer of the facility by acquiring the necessary rights, 11 permits, and approvals or by planning for the construction and 12 operation of the facility, regardless of whether the person will own or operate the facility. 13

14 "Nonparticipating property" means real property that is 15 not a participating property.

16 "Nonparticipating residence" means a residence that is
17 located on nonparticipating property and that is existing and
18 occupied on the date that an application for a permit to
19 develop the commercial wind energy facility or the commercial
20 solar energy facility is filed with the county.

21 "Occupied community building" means any one or more of the 22 following buildings that is existing and occupied on the date 23 that the application for a permit to develop the commercial 24 wind energy facility or the commercial solar energy facility 25 is filed with the county: a school, place of worship, day care 26 facility, public library, or community center.

1	"Participating property" means real property that is the
2	subject of a written agreement between a facility owner and
3	the owner of the real property that provides the facility
4	owner an easement, option, lease, or license to use the real
5	property for the purpose of constructing a commercial wind
6	energy facility, a commercial solar energy facility, or
7	supporting facilities. "Participating property" also includes
8	real property that is owned by a facility owner for the purpose
9	of constructing a commercial wind energy facility, a
10	commercial solar energy facility, or supporting facilities.
11	"Participating residence" means a residence that is
12	located on participating property and that is existing and
13	occupied on the date that an application for a permit to
14	develop the commercial wind energy facility or the commercial
15	solar energy facility is filed with the county.
16	"Protected lands" means real property that is:
17	(1) subject to a permanent conservation right
18	consistent with the Real Property Conservation Rights Act;
19	<del>or</del>
20	(2) registered or designated as a nature preserve,
21	buffer, or land and water reserve under the Illinois
22	Natural Areas Preservation Act.
23	"Supporting facilities" means the transmission lines,
24	substations, access roads, meteorological towers, storage
25	containers, and equipment associated with the generation and
26	storage of electricity by the commercial wind energy facility

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#### or commercial solar energy facility.

# 2 "Wind tower" includes the wind turbine tower, nacelle, and 3 blades.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law or whether 4 5 the county has formed a zoning commission and adopted formal zoning under Section 5-12007, a county may establish standards 6 7 for wind farms and electric-generating wind devices commercial 8 wind energy facilities, commercial solar energy facilities, or 9 both. The standards may include, without limitation, the 10 height of the devices and the number of devices that may be 11 located within a geographic area all of the requirements 12 specified in this Section but may not include requirements for commercial wind energy facilities or commercial solar energy 13 14 facilities that are more restrictive than specified in this 15 Section. A county may also regulate the siting of wind farms 16 and electric-generating wind devices commercial wind energy 17 facilities with standards that are not more restrictive than the requirements specified in this Section in unincorporated 18 19 areas of the county that are outside of the zoning 20 jurisdiction of a municipality and that are outside the 1.5-mile radius surrounding the zoning jurisdiction of a 21 22 municipality.

23 <u>There shall be</u> (c) If a county has elected to establish 24 standards under subsection (b), before the county grants 25 siting approval or a special use permit for a commercial wind 26 energy facility or a commercial solar energy facility, or

1 modification of an approved siting or special use permit, the 2 county board of the county in which the facility is to be sited or the zoning board of appeals for the county shall hold at 3 least one public hearing. The public hearing shall be 4 5 conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and shall be held not more than 60 days after the filing of the 6 7 application for the facility. The county shall allow interested parties to a special use permit an opportunity to 8 9 present evidence and to cross examine witnesses at the 10 hearing, but the county may impose reasonable restrictions on 11 the public hearing, including reasonable time limitations on 12 the presentation of evidence and the cross-examination of 13 witnesses. The county shall also allow public comment at the public hearing in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The 14 county shall make its siting and permitting decisions not more 15 16 than 30 days prior to a siting decision by the county board 17 after the conclusion of the public hearing. Notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general 18 circulation in the county. A commercial wind energy facility 19 20 owner, as defined in the Renewable Energy Facilities Agricultural Impact Mitigation Act, must enter into an 21 22 agricultural impact mitigation agreement with the Department 23 of Agriculture prior to the date of the required public hearing. A commercial wind energy facility owner seeking an 24 25 extension of a permit granted by a county prior to July 24, 2015 (the effective date of Public Act 99-132) must enter into 26

1 agricultural impact mitigation agreement with the an 2 Department of Agriculture prior to a decision by the county to grant the permit extension. Counties may allow test wind 3 4 towers or test solar energy systems to be sited without formal 5 approval by the county board. Any provision of a county zoning 6 ordinance pertaining to wind farms, commercial wind energy 7 facilities, or commercial solar energy facilities that was in effect before January 27, 2023 may continue in effect 8 9 notwithstanding any changes made in Public Act 102-1123 and, if applicable, any provision of a county zoning ordinance 10 11 pertaining to wind farms that was in effect before August 16, 12 2007 may continue in effect notwithstanding the changes made 13 in Public Act 95-203.

14 (d) A county with an existing zoning ordinance in conflict 15 with this Section shall amend that zoning ordinance to be in 16 compliance with this Section within 120 days after January 27, 17 2023 (the effective date of Public Act 102 1123).

18 (e) A county may <u>not</u> require <u>a wind tower or other</u> 19 <u>renewable energy system that is used exclusively by an end</u> 20 <u>user to be setback more than 1.1 times the height of the</u> 21 <u>renewable energy system from the end user's property line.</u>÷

22 <u>Only a county may establish standards for wind farms,</u> 23 <u>electric-generating wind devices, and commercial wind energy</u> 24 <u>facilities, as that term is defined in Section 10 of the</u> 25 <u>Renewable Energy Facilities Agricultural Impact Mitigation</u> 26 <u>Act, in unincorporated areas of the county outside of the</u>

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1	zoning jurisdiction of a muni	cipality	and outside the 1.5-mile
2	radius surrounding the zoning	jurisdio	ction of a municipality.
3	(1) a wind tower of a	a commerc	cial wind energy facility
4	to be sited as follows,	with se	tback distances measured
5	from the center of the ba	<del>se of the</del>	wind tower:
6	Setback Description	Setback	Distance
7	Occupied Community	-2.1 tim	es the maximum blade tip
8	Buildings	-height	of the wind tower to the
9		nearest	point on the outside
10		wall of	the structure
11	Participating Residences	<u> 1.1 tim</u>	es the maximum blade tip
12		height	of the wind tower to the
13		-nearest	point on the outside
14		wall of	the structure
15	Nonparticipating Residences		es the maximum blade tip
16		height	of the wind tower to the
17		nearest	point on the outside
18		-wall of	the structure
19	Boundary Lines of	None	

20 Participating Property-

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1	Boundary Lines of	1.1 times the maximum blade tip
2	Nonparticipating Property	height of the wind tower to the
3		nearest point on the property
4		line of the nonparticipating
5		property
6	Public Road Rights of Way	1.1 times the maximum blade tip

7	height of the wind tower
8	to the center point of the
9	

- 10 Overhead Communication and 1.1 times the maximum blade tip
- 11 Electric Transmission height of the wind tower to the
- 12 and Distribution Facilities nearest edge of the property
- 13 (Not Including Overhead line, easement, or
- 14 Utility Service Lines to right of way
- 15 Individual Houses or containing the overhead line
- 16 <del>Outbuildings)</del>

### 17 Overhead Utility Service None

- 18 Lines to Individual
- 19 Houses or Outbuildings

20	Fish and Wildlife Areas	2.1 times the maximum blade
21	and Illinois Nature	tip height of the wind tower
22	Preserve Commission	to the nearest point on the

1	Protected Lands	property line of the fish and
2		wildlife area or protected
3		land
4	This Section does not e	exempt or excuse compliance with
5	electric facility cleara	nces approved or required by the
6	National Electrical Code	, The National Electrical Safety
7	<del>Code, Illinois Commerc</del>	ce Commission, Federal Energy
8	Regulatory Commission, an	d their designees or successors.
9	(2) a wind tower of a	a commercial wind energy facility
10	to be sited so that ind	ustry standard computer modeling
11	indicates that any o	ccupied community building or
12	nonparticipating residen	ee will not experience more than
13	<del>30 hours per year of</del>	
14	operating conditions;	
15	(3) a commercial sola	ar energy facility to be sited as
16	follows, with setback dia	stances measured from the nearest
17	edge of any component of t	the facility:
18	Setback Description	- Setback Distance
19	Occupied Community	150 feet from the nearest
20	Buildings and Dwellings on	point on the outside wall
21	Nonparticipating Properties	of the structure

22 Boundary Lines of None

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1	Participating Property		
2 3	Public Road Rights-of-Way		
4	Boundary Lines of Nonparticipating Property		
6 7		line of the nonparticipating property	
8		lar energy facility to be sited a	
9		perimeter is enclosed by fencing	
10		least 6 feet and no more than 2	25
11	feet; and		
12 13		lar energy facility to be sited : 	
14		nd when the solar energy facility	
15	arrays are at full tilt.		0
16	_	orth in this subsection (e) may b	<del>se</del>
17	-	ten consent of the owner of eac	
18	affected nonparticipating p	roperty.	
19	(f) A county may not set	a sound limitation for wind tower	<del>rs</del>
20	in commercial wind energy	facilitics or any components :	in
21	commercial solar energy fa	cilities that is more restrictiv	<del>ve</del>
22	than the sound limitatic	ons established by the Illino:	is
23	Pollution Control Board un	der 35 Ill. Adm. Code Parts 900	<del>),</del>

1 <del>901, and 910.</del>

2 (g) A county may not place any restriction on the 3 installation or use of a commercial wind energy facility or a 4 commercial solar energy facility unless it adopts an ordinance 5 that complies with this Section. A county may not establish 6 siting standards for supporting facilities that preclude 7 development of commercial wind energy facilities or commercial 8 solar energy facilities.

9 A request for siting approval or a special use permit for a 10 commercial wind energy facility or a commercial solar energy 11 facility, or modification of an approved siting or special use 12 permit, shall be approved if the request is in compliance with the standards and conditions imposed in this Act, the zoning 13 ordinance adopted consistent with this Code, and the 14 conditions imposed under State and federal statutes and 15 16 regulations.

17 (h) A county may not adopt zoning regulations that 18 disallow, permanently or temporarily, commercial wind energy 19 facilities or commercial solar energy facilities from being 20 developed or operated in any district zoned to allow 21 agricultural or industrial uses.

(i) A county may not require permit application fees for a commercial wind energy facility or commercial solar energy facility that are unreasonable. All application fees imposed by the county shall be consistent with fees for projects in the county with similar capital value and cost.

(j) Except as otherwise provided in this Section, a county 1 2 shall not require standards for construction, decommissioning, or deconstruction of a commercial wind energy facility or 3 commercial solar energy facility or related financial 4 5 assurances that are more restrictive than those included in the Department of Agriculture's standard wind farm 6 7 agricultural impact mitigation agreement, template 81818, or standard solar agricultural impact mitigation agreement, 8 9 version 8.19.19, as applicable and in effect on December 31, 2022. The amount of any decommissioning payment shall be in 10 11 accordance with the financial assurance required by those 12 agricultural impact mitigation agreements.

13 (j-5) A commercial wind energy facility or a commercial solar energy facility shall file a farmland drainage plan with 14 the county and impacted drainage districts outlining how 15 16 surface and subsurface drainage of farmland will be restored 17 during and following construction or deconstruction of the facility. The plan is to be created independently by the 18 facility developer and shall include the location of any 19 20 potentially impacted drainage district facilities to the extent this information is publicly available from the county 21 22 or the drainage district, plans to repair any subsurface 23 drainage affected during construction or deconstruction using procedures outlined in the agricultural impact mitigation 24 25 agreement entered into by the commercial wind energy facility 26 owner or commercial solar energy facility owner, and

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procedures for the repair and restoration of surface drainage affected during construction or deconstruction. All surface and subsurface damage shall be repaired as soon as reasonably practicable.

5 (k) A county may not condition approval of a commercial 6 wind energy facility or commercial solar energy facility on a 7 property value guarantee and may not require a facility owner 8 to pay into a neighboring property devaluation escrow account. 9 (1) A county may require certain vegetative screening surrounding a commercial wind energy facility or commercial 10 11 solar energy facility but may not require earthen berms or 12 similar structures.

(m) A county may set blade tip height limitations for wind towers in commercial wind energy facilities but may not set a blade tip height limitation that is more restrictive than the height allowed under a Determination of No Hazard to Air Navigation by the Federal Aviation Administration under 14 CFR Part 77.

19 (n) A county may require that a commercial wind energy 20 facility owner or commercial solar energy facility owner 21 provide:

22 (1) the results and recommendations from consultation 23 with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources that are 24 obtained through the Ecological Compliance Assessment Tool 25 (EcoCAT) or a comparable successor tool; and

(2) the results of the United States Fish and Wildlife

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1	Service's Information for Planning and Consulting
2	environmental review or a comparable successor tool that
3	is consistent with (i) the "U.S. Fish and Wildlife
4	Service's Land-Based Wind Energy Guidelines" and (ii) any
5	applicable United States Fish and Wildlife Service solar
6	wildlife guidelines that have been subject to public
7	review.
8	(o) A county may require a commercial wind energy facility
9	or commercial solar energy facility to adhere to the
10	recommendations provided by the Illinois Department of Natural
11	Resources in an EcoCAT natural resource review report under 17
12	Ill. Adm. Code Part 1075.
13	(p) A county may require a facility owner to:
14	(1) demonstrate avoidance of protected lands as
15	identified by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources
16	and the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission; or

17 (2) consider the recommendations of the Illinois
 18 Department of Natural Resources for setbacks from
 19 protected lands, including areas identified by the

Illinois Nature Preserve Commission.

21 (q) A county may require that a facility owner provide
22 evidence of consultation with the Illinois State Historic
23 Preservation Office to assess potential impacts on
24 State-registered historic sites under the Illinois State
25 Agency Historic Resources Preservation Act.

26 (r) To maximize community benefits, including, but not

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limited to, reduced stormwater runoff, flooding, and erosion 1 2 at the ground mounted solar energy system, improved soil health, and increased foraging habitat for game birds, 3 songbirds, and pollinators, a county may (1) require a 4 5 commercial solar energy facility owner to plant, establish, and maintain for the life of the facility vegetative ground 6 7 cover, consistent with the goals of the Pollinator Friendly Solar Site Act and (2) require the submittal of a vegetation 8 management plan that is in compliance with the agricultural 9 impact mitigation agreement in the application to construct 10 11 and operate a commercial solar energy facility in the county 12 if the vegetative ground cover and vegetation management plan comply with the requirements of the underlying agreement with 13 the landowner or landowners where the facility will be 14 15 constructed.

16 No later than 90 days after January 27, 2023 (the 17 effective date of Public Act 102 1123), the Illinois Department of Natural Resources shall develop guidelines for 18 vegetation management plans that may be required under this 19 20 subsection for commercial solar energy facilities. The 21 guidelines must include guidance for short-term and long-term 22 property management practices that provide and maintain native 23 and non-invasive naturalized perennial vegetation to protect the health and well-being of pollinators. 24

25 (s) If a facility owner enters into a road use agreement
26 with the Illinois Department of Transportation, a road

district, or other unit of local government relating to a 1 2 commercial wind energy facility or a commercial solar energy facility, the road use agreement shall require the facility 3 owner to be responsible for (i) the reasonable cost of 4 5 improving roads used by the facility owner to construct the commercial wind energy facility or the commercial solar energy 6 7 facility and (ii) the reasonable cost of repairing roads used by the facility owner during construction of the commercial 8 9 wind energy facility or the commercial solar energy facility 10 so that those roads are in a condition that is safe for the 11 driving public after the completion of the facility's 12 construction. Roadways improved in preparation for and during the construction of the commercial wind energy facility 13 <del>or</del> commercial solar energy facility shall be repaired and 14 restored to the improved condition at the reasonable cost of 15 16 the developer if the roadways have degraded or were damaged as 17 a result of construction related activities.

The road use agreement shall not require the facility 18 19 owner to pay costs, fees, or charges for road work that is not specifically and uniquely attributable to the construction of 20 21 the commercial wind energy facility or the commercial solar 22 energy facility. Road-related fees, permit fees, or other charges imposed by the Illinois Department of Transportation, 23 a road district, or other unit of local government under a road 24 25 use agreement with the facility owner shall be reasonably related to the cost of administration of the road use 26

1 agreement.

2 (s-5) The facility owner shall also compensate landowners for crop losses or other agricultural damages resulting from 3 damage to the drainage system caused by the construction of 4 the commercial wind energy facility or the commercial solar 5 energy facility. The commercial wind energy facility owner or 6 7 commercial solar energy facility owner shall repair or pay for the repair of all damage to the subsurface drainage system 8 caused by the construction of the commercial wind energy 9 facility or the commercial solar energy facility in accordance 10 11 with the agriculture impact mitigation agreement requirements 12 for repair of drainage. The commercial wind energy facility owner or commercial solar energy facility owner shall repair 13 or pay for the repair and restoration of surface drainage 14 caused by the construction or deconstruction of the commercial 15 16 wind energy facility or the commercial solar energy facility 17 as soon as reasonably practicable.

(t) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a facility 18 19 owner with siting approval from a county to construct a 20 commercial wind energy facility or a commercial solar energy 21 facility is authorized to cross or impact a drainage system, 22 including, but not limited to, drainage tiles, open drainage 23 ditches, culverts, and water gathering vaults, owned or under the control of a drainage district under the Illinois Drainage 24 25 Code without obtaining prior agreement or approval from the 26 drainage district in accordance with the farmland drainage

1 plan required by subsection (j-5).

2	(u) The amendments to this Section adopted in Public Act
3	102-1123 do not apply to: (1) an application for siting
4	approval or for a special use permit for a commercial wind
5	energy facility or commercial solar energy facility if the
6	application was submitted to a unit of local government before
7	January 27, 2023 (the effective date of Public Act 102 1123);
8	(2) a commercial wind energy facility or a commercial solar
9	energy facility if the facility owner has submitted an
10	agricultural impact mitigation agreement to the Department of
11	Agriculture before January 27, 2023 (the effective date of
12	Public Act 102-1123); or (3) a commercial wind energy or
13	commercial solar energy development on property that is
14	located within an enterprise zone certified under the Illinois
15	Enterprise Zone Act, that was classified as industrial by the
16	appropriate zoning authority on or before January 27, 2023,
17	and that is located within 4 miles of the intersection of
18	Interstate 88 and Interstate 39.
19	(Source: P.A. 102-1123, eff. 1-27-23; 103-81, eff. 6-9-23;

20 103-580, eff. 12-8-23.)