

What happens at the end of a wind farm's useful life?

Decommissioning is **the process of removing all wind turbines** and returning the land to its original condition.

- » Modern wind farms are designed to operate for at least 25 to 30 years, during which time they are carefully managed and maintained.
- » We often replace aging wind turbines with newer, more efficient technology to extend their useful lives another 25 to 30 years.
- » When turbines are decommissioned, we are contractually required to **remove from the surface of the land** entirely.
- » In most communities we post a bond, consistent with our contractual commitment to landowners, that guarantees we will cover the full cost of decommissioning and ensures taxpayers aren't left with any financial burden.
- » Every component of the turbine **within four feet of the surface** is removed from the site.
 - This ensures farming, ranching and other future land uses can continue, unimpeded by any remnants of the wind farm.
- » **The salvage value** of spare parts and scrap metal is typically enough to cover the removal costs, as a recent study found.¹
- » To ensure taxpayers do not have to pay for removing any part of a wind farm, as part of a decommissioning agreement, **our company is required to post security to cover the full costs of decommissioning.**



WIND FARM REPOWERING



When we have identified a site with good wind resource, available land and connection to the power grid, instead of decommissioning a wind farm it makes sense to continue to generate power, updating turbine technology as it evolves.

In California's Altamont Pass, we replaced 283 turbines that were more than 30-years old, with just 20 modern wind turbines capable of generating more electricity with twice the efficiency of the previous wind project. The process, known as repowering, helps extend the life-span of many wind farms.

"This project is yet another example of how California is leading the way to a clean energy future," said California Energy Commissioner, David Hochschild. "Replacing some of the earliest wind technology with modern, efficient turbines, and allowing an opportunity for a public utility like Sonoma Clean Power to invest directly in clean energy for its citizens helps both reduce the cost of electricity and the impact of facilities like this on our environment."

Sources:

¹ Decommissioning Study for the Pinnacle Wind Power Project, Jan. 19, 2011.