- Adhering to regular construction work hours Mondays through Saturdays, and typically not working on Sundays or after hours;
- Implementing BMPs during construction, such as using appropriate mufflers; and
- Notifying adjacent landowners of noise impacts in advance (such as if blasting becomes necessary).

3.11 Socioeconomics

To understand the effects this Project would have on the socioeconomic conditions in the Towns of Cape Vincent and Lyme, in Jefferson County, New York, it is important to understand the current state of the economy in the area. Socioeconomic information is described in terms of population and housing, economy and employment, and municipal revenues and taxes.

3.11.1 Affected Environment

Existing population and housing, employment and income, and municipal revenues and taxes in the County, Towns of Cape Vincent and Lyme, and Villages of Cape Vincent and Chaumont are described and evaluated below.

3.11.1.1 Population and Housing

The estimated population of Jefferson County in 2005 was 116,384. Between 1990 and 2000, the County's population increased by 0.7 percent and between 2000 and 2005 it increased by 4.2 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

According to U.S. Census Bureau (2006) data for 2000, the Towns of Cape Vincent and Lyme have populations of 3,345 and 2,015, respectively; and the Villages of Cape Vincent and Chaumont have populations of 760 and 592, respectively. All but the Village of Chaumont experienced a population increase in the Project area between 1990 and 2000. The Towns of Cape Vincent and Lyme experienced population increases of 20.8 percent and 18.5 percent, respectively and the Village of Cape Vincent experienced an increase of 11.3 percent. The Village of Chaumont experienced a slight decrease of 0.2 percent (1 person) between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

Housing units for Jefferson County, and each municipality for 2000, are presented in Table 3-4. In 2000, the number of total available housing units in the two Towns and two Villages varied. The Town of Cape Vincent had the most number of housing units and the highest vacancy rate at 2,783 total units, of which 867 units (31.2 percent) were occupied and 1,916 units (68.8 percent) were vacant. The Town of Lyme had a similarly high vacancy rate and low occupancy rate. The Villages had higher occupancy rates ranging from 69.3 percent to 85.3 percent (Table 3-10).

Table 3-10
2000 County and Municipality Housing Units

County and Town/Village	Occupied Housing		Vacant Housing		Total Available Housing Units
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Jefferson County	40,068	74.1%	14,002	25.9%	54,070
Town of Cape Vincent	867	31.2%	1,916	68.8%	2,783
Town of Lyme	813	37.2%	1,370	62.8%	2,183
Village of Cape Vincent	348	69.3%	154	30.7%	502
Village of Chaumont	233	85.3%	40	14.7%	273
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2006					

In 2000, the median value of owner-occupied units in the Towns of Cape Vincent and Lyme were $76,400 and $73,600, respectively, and the Village of Cape Vincent ($70,900) were above the median housing value for Jefferson County ($68,200), but were still moderate to low when compared to the median value for New York State ($148,700). The median housing value for the Village of Chaumont ($57,200) was $11,000 below Jefferson County's median value (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

3.11.1.2 Economy and Employment

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2006), the largest industry in Jefferson County in 2000 was educational, health, and social services, with 24.4 percent of all workers employed in this sector. The second largest industry was retail trade (14.2 percent), and the third largest industry was public administration (10.4 percent). The educational, health, and social services was the top industry in each Town and Village, and the second and third largest industries in the Towns and Villages varied between public administration and retail trade. However, the third largest industry in the Town of Cape Vincent was construction (11.4 percent). The 2005 unemployment rate for Jefferson County was 4.8 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

3.11.1.3 Municipal Revenues and Taxes

Municipalities (i.e., Towns, Villages and counties) are responsible for providing specific services to those who live and work within their boundaries. Municipalities incur costs associated with providing these services, and to offset these costs, collect revenues by levying taxes. Tax revenues in the Project area accrue from both sales taxes and real property taxes. The taxing jurisdictions in the Project area include Jefferson County, the Towns of Cape Vincent and Lyme, the Villages of Cape Vincent and Chaumont, and the Thousand Islands and Lyme Central school districts.

The total 2005 property tax levy for Jefferson County was $20,932,051. Of this amount, the property tax levy for the Towns of Cape Vincent and Lyme were $276,000 and $240,750, respectively. The property tax levy for the Villages of Cape Vincent and Chaumont were $225,981 and $68,472, respectively (New York State Office of Real Property Services, 2006b).

For those items not included in the Jefferson County Sales and Use Tax Exemption (e.g., clothing, footwear, and items used to make or repair exempt clothing costing less the $110 per item or pair) a total sales tax of 7.75 percent is levied on purchases within the County (Jefferson County retains 3.75 percent). The current sales tax rate for Jefferson County is 7.75 percent, which includes a 4 percent state tax and 3.75 percent local tax (New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, 2006).

3.11.2 Potential Impacts

The Project would have both direct and indirect positive economic effects on participating individual landowners, Villages, Towns, County, and school districts. These effects would commence during construction and continue throughout the operating life of the Project. Short-term benefits of Project construction would include additional employment, income, and expenditures associated with construction of the Project. For example, construction workers would purchase food in local restaurants and may stay at local hotels or in nearby campgrounds. Long-term benefits operating the Project would generate significant additional revenue through a Licensing Fee to host communities, a PILOT agreement, purchases of goods and services, and lease payments to participating landowners.

The Project would provide one to three operational jobs, and likely result in some increased visitation to the Project area by tourists interested in wind power. All of these results could have a beneficial effect on local businesses. The overall socioeconomic impact of Project construction and operation is discussed in detail below.

3.11.2.1 Population and Housing

Jefferson County and the Towns and Villages located in the Project area experienced a moderate growth rate between 1990 and 2000. This trend likely would continue regardless of whether or not the proposed Project is built. The Project would not generate construction employment at a level that would significantly increase population in either the Towns or the County. Even though employment during the construction period would be significant (approximately 50 to 150 construction jobs), this employment is relatively short-term, and is not expected to result in workers permanently relocating to the area. For the duration of construction (approximately 7 to 10 months) there could be a temporary increase in local population and demand for temporary

housing by out-of-town workers. However, this demand would be relatively modest, and could easily be accommodated by the availability of vacant housing in the affected Towns and surrounding communities. Beyond this relatively minor (and positive) short-term impact, Project construction would not have significant impact on population and housing.

Based on the above housing information and high vacancy rate, there is likely an adequate supply of local housing and temporary accommodations in Jefferson County for the expected Project demand. This number of housing units would sufficiently accommodate construction workers. Few new permanent employees are anticipated for operation of the wind facility, therefore no long-term impacts on local housing are anticipated.

Approximately one to three full-time jobs would be created once the Project is fully operational. These employees would be expected to reside locally, which could translate into the purchase of a few homes and the addition of a few families to the surrounding communities. Based on vacancy rates in the Towns, there would be an adequate number of housing units available for purchase or rent. Although this represents a positive economic impact, long-term employment associated with the Project is not large enough to have a significant impact on local population or housing characteristics.

3.11.2.2 Economy and Employment

Based on construction employment figures at other wind power projects in New York, it is anticipated that construction of the St. Lawrence Wind Energy Project would employ a total construction workforce of approximately 50 to 150 workers. It is anticipated that about two-thirds of this anticipated workforce would be from the western New York labor market, which in light of the size of the labor force and the number of unemployed, can easily supply the required workforce. Local employment would benefit those in the construction trades, including equipment operators, truck drivers, laborers, and electricians. Project construction would require workers with specialized skills, such as crane operators, turbine assemblers, specialized excavators, and high voltage electrical workers. It is anticipated that the majority of these workers would be located outside of the Project area and would remain only for the duration of construction.

In addition to the direct jobs created during construction, this Project is expected to have an indirect impact on the local economy through the purchases of goods and services, which would support local businesses and perhaps result in the creation of some additional new jobs.

With respect to tourism in the region, it is worth noting that other wind power projects in New York have resulted in a significant increase in visitation from tourists interested in the projects. This has resulted in increased local expenditures for goods and services, but these have not been quantified, and are probably fairly modest.

3.11.2.3 Municipal Revenues and Taxes

The proposed Project would significantly increase the revenues of each of the taxing jurisdictions in the Project area. Annual PILOT payments would be negotiated, along with road use agreements. The Project would have a beneficial impact on municipal budgets and taxes because the taxing jurisdictions would receive additional annual revenue from the Project in the form of PILOT revenues, which would be necessarily distributed to the relevant taxing jurisdictions according to their share in the combined tax rate.

During construction, the Project would not impact municipal budgets and taxes. Temporary construction workers would not create significant demand for municipal or school district services or facilities. These workers would not generate significant revenue through payment of property taxes. The Project would result in impacts to the local road system and this would have the potential to affect local highway department expenditures and budgets.

3.11.3 Mitigation Measures

As described above, construction and operation of the proposed Project would not have a significant adverse impact on local population and housing, and would have a short-term beneficial impact on the local economy and employment. The negotiated PILOT agreement would provide a significant long-term benefit to the communities and school districts. Consequently, no mitigation is necessary to address these impacts.

The only potential adverse impact to municipal budgets and taxes would be the impact of Project construction on local roads, and the need to repair or upgrade these roads to accommodate construction vehicles and higher activity. To mitigate this impact, any construction-related damage or improvements to State, County, or Town roads would be the responsibility of the Applicant, and would be undertaken at no expense to the municipalities.

3.12 Telecommunications

3.12.1 Affected Environment

Comsearch was contracted to evaluate the potential for the Project to impact existing telecommunication signals. Comsearch performed an analysis to evaluate the potential effect of the planned St. Lawrence Wind Energy Project in Jefferson County, New York on existing non-