



## **Press release**

*Morges, 21 April 2021*

### **Sainte-Croix wind-farm project**

## **Romande Energie receives green light from the Federal Supreme Court**

**The Federal Supreme Court has ruled on the two secondary appeals lodged against the project to build a wind farm at Sainte-Croix, rejecting their key points on hearing the case brought by the project stakeholders. It has added two additional conditions on ancillary points to the building permit and the land-use plan for the six-turbine project. Romande Energie, which is leading the project, is very pleased with the decision since this recognises its high standards and the importance for Switzerland of harnessing the wind as a source of renewable energy.**

On 8 November 2018, the Vaud Cantonal Court of Administrative and Public Law confirmed approval of the cantonal land-use plan and award of the building permit for the Sainte-Croix wind farm, following the Canton's and Municipality of Sainte-Croix's decisions in 2017. Two secondary appeals were subsequently lodged with the Federal Supreme Court. The first was brought by Association pour la sauvegarde des Gittaz et du Mont-des-Cerfs, an environmental protection organisation. The second was lodged by Association Suisse pour la Protection des Oiseaux (ASPO/BirdLife) together with Helvetia Nostra, a heritage protection association.

**In its ruling on 18 March 2021, the Federal Supreme Court dismissed the principal grounds for appeal by the project's opponents and recognised its suitability. The Court also reiterated that developing and using renewable energies is a matter of national interest.**

The following two conditions have been attached to the decisions to approve the cantonal land-use plan and building permit:

- The special noise rules (as defined in Article 7(2) of the Noise Abatement Ordinance) at Chalet du Mont-des-Cerfs will have to be reviewed, and so the matter has been referred to the Vaud Interior Affairs and Institutions Department for further decisions in this regard.
- The length of the closure of the Col de l'Aiguillon road should be extended to protect capercaillies (a type of bird). The road is closed to motor traffic from 1 December until 31 March. Between 1 April and 31 May, it is open only for forestry operations and for preparation of the mountain pastures for summer grazing.

### **Next steps**

Romande Energie is very pleased with the Federal Supreme Court's decision. As with the previous cantonal court ruling on the initial appeal, the latest decision recognises the high standards of this wind-farm project as well as of the key role that wind energy will play in the energy transition.

Once the cantonal authorities have addressed both the aforementioned conditions, civil engineering work connecting the wind farm to the power grid can begin in conjunction with the Municipality's restructuring work in the hamlet of Gittaz. The current expectation is that the wind turbines will be built in spring-summer 2023, with the wind farm commissioned in the following autumn.



Working alongside the municipal authorities, Romande Energie will keep the local population briefed on the project's progress and the next steps on a regular basis to establish a dialogue and maintain complete transparency. Special attention will be paid during the works phase to minimising disruption to local residents.

### **Strengths of the project**

This project marks the advent of wind power as a source of energy in Vaud, which boasts Switzerland's greatest potential for harnessing the wind, through this first-ever development in the canton. The project will establish wind as a key pillar of the energy mix and as a vital complement to solar and hydro power, especially during winter months. The project will also give the inhabitants of the Jura zone in the canton of Vaud access to locally generated renewable energy, in perfect alignment with Switzerland's Energy Strategy 2050 to reduce carbon intensity in Switzerland.

The power generated will be injected into the grid at the existing Sainte-Croix substation.

### **Project at a glance**

The Sainte-Croix wind farm will consist of six wind turbines located at two separate sites – La Gittaz-Dessus and Le Mont-des-Cerfs. With annual output estimated at 20 to 26 million kilowatt hours, it is expected to cover the equivalent of the average annual consumption of 6,100 households, or close to 2.5 times the number of households living in Sainte-Croix.

[www.eoliennes-saintecroix.ch](http://www.eoliennes-saintecroix.ch)

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### **Romande Energie at a glance**

Romande Energie Group is the leading supplier of electricity in Western Switzerland and a mainstay in the Swiss energy industry. It offers a wealth of sustainable solutions for the distribution and generation of electricity, and in energy services, energy efficiency and electromobility.

All its generation assets are driven by renewable sources of energy. Additionally, it is working hand in hand with customers, investors and employees to provide ever-better standards of living through innovative services and a commitment to corporate social responsibility. Romande Energie is dedicated, day in day out, to offering high-grade services and security of supply, just as customers expect, as well as supporting them in using more sustainable forms of energy and reducing carbon intensity across Western Switzerland.

**For more information on Romande Energie Group, visit**

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