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Please note that Empire District Electric Company is owned by Canada based Algonquin Power, through its Liberty Utilities. Below you will find the news coverage of the fate of Algonquin Power's latest wind project in their own home country.

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IAN MACALPINE & ELLIOT FERGUSON THE WHIG-STANDARD

Contractors owed millions

Local contractors who worked under tight deadlines on Amherst Island wind turbine project file liens in bid to get paid

Several sub-contractors who built the Amherst Island wind turbine project have filed liens in a Napanee court looking to be paid millions of dollars owed for unpaid work.



A sailboat passes turbines that are part of the Amherst Island wind energy project near Millhaven.

The Whig-Standard spoke to two sub-contractors who allege the main contractor on the project, Pennecon Heavy Civil, hasn't paid them since March.

The Amherst Island wind project was built by Windlectric Inc., a subsidiary of Oakville-based Algonquin Power.

Pennecon, with head offices in Newfoundland and Labrador, was hired as the general contractor or construction manager for the project.

The bulk of the construction on the island took place between September of last year and early June.

The 26-turbine, 75 megawatt Amherst Island wind project was more than a decade in the making.

The project was controversial from the start, with opposition from island residents based on fears of excessive noise from the turbines and the impact of construction and operation of the turbines on the wildlife, including birds, bats and turtles.

The project was finished ahead of schedule and is now producing power.

<http://edition.thewhig.com/epaper/iphone/homepage.aspx>

Rob Scofield, the managing director of QCE Canada, a wind turbine construction company that has built turbine projects across Canada and in New York State, claims his company is owed about \$10 million for work over the last year on the project "Basically this whole thing stinks," he said in an interview.

During the construction, Scofield said, Algonquin Power and Pennecon had fallen behind on the project and have had cost overruns of about \$90 million.

It's a \$400- to \$450-million project now, he said.

"So Algonquin power was very ecstatic that the project actually got done ahead of schedule and that it got done period because they didn't think it would ever get done," Scofield said.

"Long story short, we've all persevered since last September to put this project up, all through the winter and we put the project up 10 days in advance of when they needed to be online for the utility." In an email to the WhigStandard, Sarah Puddister, corporate communications manager for Pennecon, said Pennecon hasn't been paid in months by Algonquin Power either.

"Although our team delivered the terms of the contract and met the commercial online delivery date, neither Pennecon nor consequently our subcontractors, have been paid since April." She wrote. "The Project Administrator, Algonquin Power, advised us in mid-June, after Pennecon and its subcontractors successfully completed the project, of their decision to review project costs before releasing payment."

The Whig- Standard tried numerous times to contact officials at Algonquin Power over a two-day period, but never got a response.

Puddister said the issue should be resolved soon.

"We are working with our client to finalize this review process, and anticipate a quick and satisfactory resolution," she wrote.

Other companies owed money by Algonquin include Doornekamp Construction, T.A. Andre Contractors, Mammoet Canada and Morven Construction, among others.

Hank Doornekamp said in an interview on Thursday his company is owed "a substantial amount of money."

We supplied all the stone for the project," he said. "We floated it in from Picton."

"The Algonquin group paid the general contractor Pennecon and are holding up all funding now to all the trades because they're doing follow-up audits," Doornekamp said.

"As far as I'm concerned, that's too late. The power is on now, everything is up and running and it's pretty cheesy to not pay the trades that made it all happen. Everybody worked hard to get it to this stage."

"Now they're going to try and take a bunch of sub-contractors and put them into a difficult position."

"They're getting paid for the power, they met the deadline, which is difficult to do," Doornekamp said.

"They were going to be heavily penalized if they were not on line with power at the drop dead date at the end of June so they met that and all the trades worked hard to get that and now they'll do whatever it takes to screw us."

Scofield said Pennecon only managed the projects and hired all the sub-contractors to build it.

"There's a total of somewhere between \$50 to \$60 million owing to contractors depending on who you talk to," he said. "There's a whole whack of us who have liens on the project now."

Scofield said over a period in March and April, Pennecon stopped paying the sub-contractors.

But all workers stayed on the project seeing it to completion.

"On the faith that they were going to pay us because they kept saying 'Don't worry about it.' " Scofield said.

"I had the vice-president and president of the company shake my hand and said 'We'll pay you every damn cent, don't worry about it, just get the equipment, get more people, more equipment, get more this and get more that,' he said. "Everybody got strung along the line."

Scofield said they have court documents showing Pennecon Heavy Civil has been paid over \$36 million more than the contract value.

"That money is gone, don't know where and they're refusing to pay anybody," Algonquin is refusing to pay anybody."

Scofield said Pennecon has been less than honest when it comes to promising payment.

"We have evidence of cheques signed sitting in Newfoundland ready to be sent to us that were cancelled."

Scofield said a he was given a tracking number for a Purolater envelop containing a cheque for \$4.2 million that was never sent.

"What they did to the local people and landowners is despicable, I've never seen it, I've been 18 years all over the world doing wind parks and I've never seen them behave to local people like they did on this project."

"We all jumped in and completed the project ahead of schedule. They didn't miss a day and have been making money ever since."

All of Scofield's employees have been paid but the lack of payment from Pennecon has his company in a bind.

"We're strapped, we have no cash left at all. We've paid all of our payroll at the end of the project."

"We were running payroll between \$250,000 to \$300,000 a week just to get this done for them on the premise they were going to (pay us)."

Other issues caused by Pennecon, Scofield said, are incomplete roads on the island and landowners who have lease agreements with Windlectric have liens against their property as well.

"And they're all peeved." "This Newfoundland company is not paying anybody and won't answer anybody's calls and we're all sitting with \$50 to \$60 million owed to us," said Scofield.

"We wish to thank our team, including Pennecon employees as well as our subcontractors and suppliers," wrote Puddister. For their hard work and dedication to safety and successfully completing this challenging project."