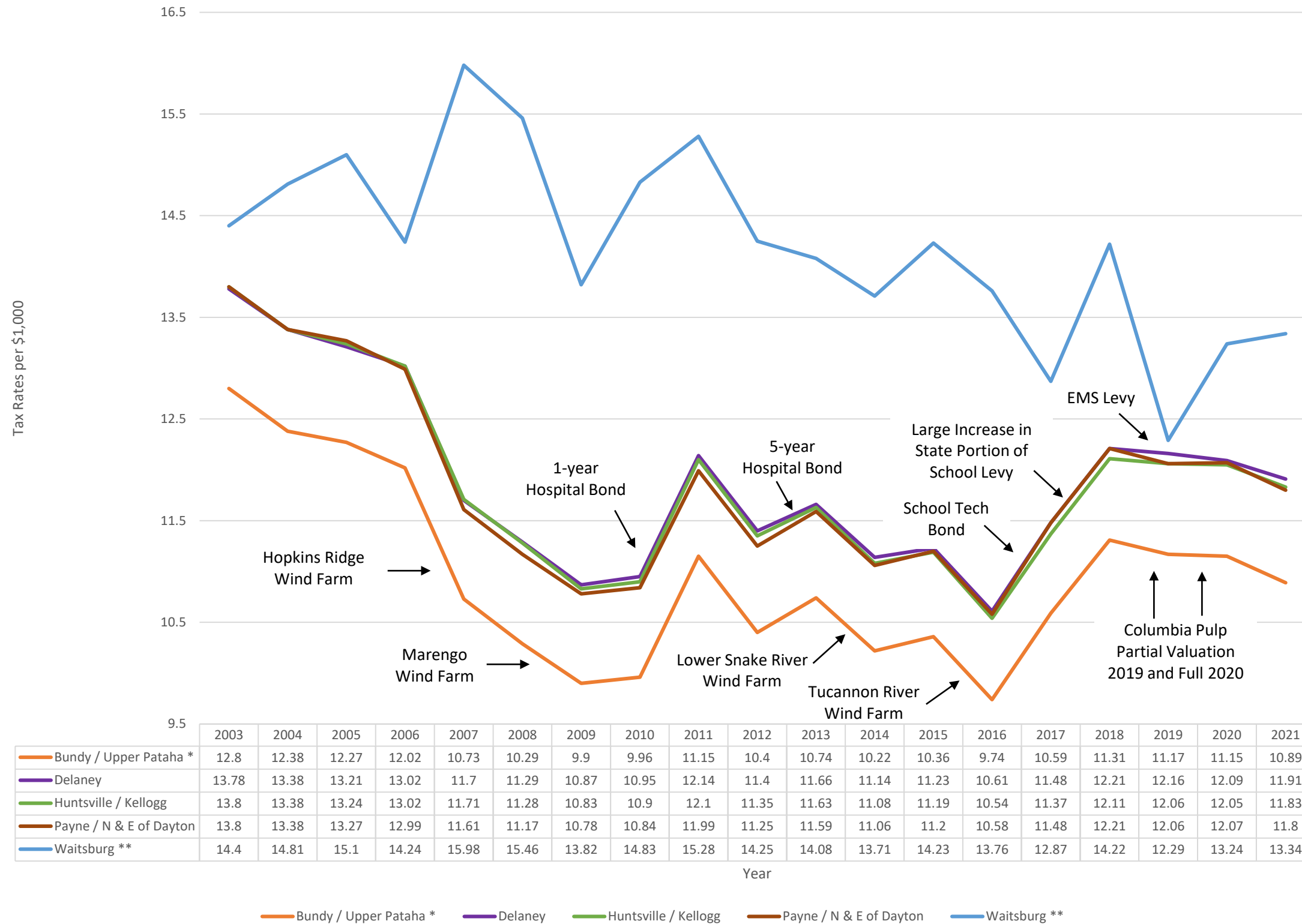


# Columbia County Tax Rates: How We All Benefit from New Business Investment

Tax Rates: 2003-2021



The wind industry has had a significant effect on the tax rate in Columbia County since the first wind farm was completed in 2006. During that time, the average tax rate in Columbia County has fallen by \$1.59 per \$1,000 in assessed value. During the same period, both the hospital and the school district have passed two bonds each, state levies have increased, and the community voted in a new EMS levy. Despite these increases, taxes have stayed low thanks to the high value the wind farms bring to the community and other business investments. Portland General Electric, PacifiCorp, and Puget Sound Energy pay the largest share of taxes here, and Columbia Pulp's valuation was added in 2019 and 2020. For comparison, Waitsburg, WA is a similar community just across the county line. Their tax rate is significantly higher than Columbia County's.

**2007:** First year taxes were collected from the wind industry. County taxes fell from an average of \$12.76 per \$1,000 to an average of \$11.43 per \$1,000. The hospital bond in 2007 fell from \$1.28 to \$0.94 per \$1,000 that year and still received \$70,000 more thanks to the wind industry taxes. This means each individual tax payer's share of that bond payment was lower.

**2009:** Average tax rate fell to \$10.61 per \$1,000 in assessed value. The school M&O Bond fell to just \$1.94 per \$1,000 and the hospital bond was reduced to just \$0.71 per \$1,000.

**2011:** A one year Hospital Computer Bond of \$1.13 was put in place and a state levy went up \$0.13, contributing to a rise in the tax rate.

**2013:** School District 2 M&O Bond increased and a state levy increased.

**2015:** Hospital added a \$5.5 million bond for major renovations. Tax rate rose an average of only \$0.12 to accommodate this community investment.

**2016:** Most recent wind farm values came in to effect, creating a tax rate average of just \$10.36 per \$1,000.

**2017:** School District 2 added a Tech Bond, and state utility values decreased, lowering the county taxable value.

**2018:** Washington State added a second State Levy to fully fund schools, causing a significant jump in the tax rate statewide.

**2019 - 2020:** The new EMS Levy came into effect in 2019 which should have increased our taxes, but the valuation of Columbia Pulp offset that increase and the individual tax rate went down.

\*Has a lower rate since it is not in a fire district

\*\*Waitsburg is included for comparison. It is 9 miles away in an adjacent county that doesn't benefit from Columbia County wind or straw pulp industry taxes. An average of all taxing districts for Waitsburg was used.