

November 21, 2016

NH Site Evaluation Committee
C/o Pamela G. Monroe, Administrator
12 South Fruit Street, Suite 10
Concord, NH 03301

Re. Antrim Wind Energy LLC, SEC Docket No. 2015-02

Dear Mr. Scott and Subcommittee Members,

Antrim Wind Energy has had the opportunity to apply twice to get their project, proposed for construction in a designated conservation area, approved. In an effort to satisfy concerns raised in the first denial of this project, the applicant has made changes aimed at minimizing project impacts and improving its mitigation package. Despite these changes, the negative impacts of this project as articulated by the Subcommittee that ruled on the application for a wind energy facility on the Tuttle Hill/Willard Mountain ridgeline three years ago are unchanged.

Approval of this project would not only set a bad precedent for future applications, it would also undermine the public's confidence in the integrity of SEC proceedings.

After considerable evaluation, the first Subcommittee to consider the Antrim Wind project found "that the Facility, as proposed, would have an unreasonable adverse effect on aesthetics." The ridgeline "creates a cradle that encompasses Willard Pond, Gregg Lake, Meadow Marsh and a number of areas containing sensitive viewpoints," including Pitcher Mountain, from which the Lempster project is already visible. The Subcommittee found "[t]here are significant qualitative impacts upon Willard Pond, Bald Mountain, Goodhue Hill, and Gregg Lake" and determined "the Facility would impose an unreasonable adverse effect on the viewshed from Willard Pond, as well as in other areas throughout the dePierrefeu Wildlife Sanctuary."

While the proposed project has eliminated the turbine closest to Willard Pond, slightly reduced the height of the other turbines, and shifted the location of turbine 9, these changes are not sufficient to negate the Subcommittee's assessment of undue dominance, nor do they meet the suggested minimal changes needed to make the project one the Subcommittee might have been able to accept. I and the many private citizens who have intervened or testified in this second proceeding are persuaded that the turbines are still "too tall and too imposing in the context of the setting." The rotating blades, in many ways more eye catching and distracting than the towers themselves, would still dominate their surroundings and create an unreasonable adverse effect.

In the first application as well as the second, AWE maintains that the visual effects of their facility will be mitigated by the off-site conservation of land in the Supersanctuary and "the region" (\$100,000 to NEFF). While it may align with the tremendous public and private effort that has gone into creating the Supersanctuary, this mitigation does nothing to reduce the aesthetic impact on the region nor the experiential impact on people who see Willard Pond as a place of sanctuary apart and distinct from our typical experience of the world around us. The Subcommittee found the same: "While additional conserved lands would be of value to wildlife

and habitat, they would not mitigate the imposing visual impact that the Facility would have on valuable viewsheds.”

In all three areas by which the first Subcommittee to review this project assessed it, the facility's size and scope on the aesthetics of the overall community, its impact on Willard Pond and the dePierrefeu Wildlife Sanctuary, and the absence of satisfactory mitigation, the current project fails to offer appreciably different impacts from those already determined to be unreasonably adverse.

To approve this project is to reject a decision by a prior SEC Subcommittee, substituting the judgment of a new group for that of the original group. Such a reversal would set a bad precedent. It would also undermine the public's confidence in the process by which such decisions are made. At a time of high cynicism towards government in general, such a reversal could be particularly damaging.

I urge you to find that this Docket is essentially the same project, albeit generating less energy, that the applicant presented in 2012, and the original decision holds.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Margaret Watkins
Dunbarton, NH

A conservationist who has worked to conserve many special places in New Hampshire but can think of none as universally accessible, peaceful, and awe-inspiring because of its setting as Willard Pond in Antrim, NH. Willard offers a near wilderness experience to people of virtually all physical abilities. There are many more visual opportunities for teaching people about alternative energy – a silver lining offered by the applicant - than there are Willard Ponds.