

April 1, 2009  
VIA Email and Certified Mail

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Thomas S. Burack, Chairman  
Energy Facility Site Evaluation Committee  
New Hampshire Dept of Environmental Services  
29 Hazen Drive, PO Box 95  
Concord, NH 03302-0095

Re: Opposed to application of Granite Reliable Power (“GRP”), LLC, Docket No. 2008-04

Dear Chairman Burack:

My wife and I have been residents of Jefferson, NH, for nearly six years, having moved from the urban environs of Boston to enjoy the tranquil vistas of the White Mountains. Little did we know that Coos County ridgelines would soon become the target for industrial wind farms. Although we realize that “clean energy” is a popular buzzword these days, I strongly object to what may be an impetuous and ill-advised sell-out of unique and irreplaceable views in exchange for foreign profiteering. The people of Jefferson took a stand last year when they VOTED DOWN an article that would have permitted ANY wind energy systems within the town, let alone a system that conformed to the proposed regulations.

Thank you, and through you to the committee (and sub-committee), for calling and attending the recent public hearing in Lancaster town hall, and for extending the input period. Some valid points were made in opposition to the project and the majority of those citizens voicing reasons in support for the project appeared to base that support on false, incomplete or distorted information. It is actually quite comforting to observe that there are so few good arguments in favor of this project that the vocal supporters could only spout their desperate and mis-informed arguments. Even ten bad arguments do not offset one good reason to oppose the project: it provides no real benefit to the state of New Hampshire or to the local citizens, at the cost of permanent damage. There are other good reasons to oppose this project, as outlined below, among others already expressed cogently in letters by other concerned citizens.

In my opinion, a new bio-mass power plant may be a better use of the local natural and sustainable resources, use more of the local workforce and would provide numerous other local

benefits not found in the GRP proposal. The GRP project may well render such an alternative prohibitively expensive. If this project is approved and locals were to somehow marshal the necessary investments for a local bio-mass plant, the additional cost of a new or upgraded transmission facility may well eviscerate the best of intentions and doom this more promising alternative. Please consider this potential lost opportunity in your deliberations.

Fortunately, your committee is charged with evaluation of the pertinent facts, provided by qualified experts and observers, rather than the merely mis-informed proponents who appear to be letting themselves be stamped to their ultimate shame.

For example, some say: “This project will bring jobs, wind energy is free, we need the increased county tax money, wind towers are pleasant to look at, wind power is clean, and it will free us from reliance on foreign oil.” Let’s take a look at some of these unsubstantiated myths.

- A. “This project will bring jobs...” Yes, while technically true, the real issue is what TYPE of jobs, how MANY jobs, how long they will LAST, and whether anyone local will remain employed. In fact, as you know, most of the “jobs” are short-term (for construction), and there is no local source for the few long-term jobs of monitoring and maintenance duties. All of the manufacturing is obviously done somewhere else; no jobs here.

Furthermore, one could also say that this development will result in the net LOSS of jobs in the area, as other, more labor-intensive power generators find a poisoned climate and insurmountable entry costs. This will happen where all the remaining power transmission capacity has been stolen for wind energy transmission, as further discussed below. For the short-term wind-farm construction jobs (paying people to permanently destroy the woods), are we willing to ignore the loss of potentially hundreds of sustainable woods jobs no longer filled because a bio-mass plant can’t get a foothold here? Any large wind project will devour the investment capital and the remaining transmission capacity in the North Country. This, by itself, provides an unreasonable downside for the future viability of the Coos County economy, historically anchored in the forestry sector. We need to put loggers and truckers to work, as they are already here, already trained, already equipped and are looking for work.

- B. “Wind energy is free...” This simplistic distortion is too easy to dispel. If it is “free”, then why would a developer spend more than \$275 million to harvest it to sell it to people in Connecticut? Why must the innocent locals sacrifice their priceless views for the ostentatious overuse and waste of anyone willing to pay for “free” power? More to the

point, what other intangible costs must be overlooked for “free” wind? Wouldn’t Coos County be better off (in the long run) with perhaps smaller wind turbines or bio-mass plants supplying local communities or other local alternatives?

One major factor is certainly the transmission costs. You and other experts know that the power supply loop for Coos County was built to support scattered rural consumers, not for bulk transmission to remote states. Like any such line, it has a limited capacity.

Many other bulk suppliers have their own lines leading out of state, such as the Comerford lines directly to Woburn, Massachusetts. To allow an energy production facility to cheaply coat-tail bulk transmission onto this 130kV distribution line may actually INCREASE the costs to local consumers. This cost increase will come from the heavier loads on the infrastructure resulting in loss of usable power through more inefficient line losses. We will literally be paying to heat the sky. Running at nearly peak capacity will certainly impact maintenance costs and could result in more frequent outages to consumers. Finally, any necessary upgrade will come sooner and at a higher cost if the capacity is largely diverted outside of its intended local purpose. At what price is “free” energy if it costs us \$200 million to upgrade a power loop prematurely?

Ironically, local consumers will probably be unable to purchase most of the power generated from the proposed wind farm, leaving them to rely upon other remote sources, or looking for other local alternatives that are more reliable, and available, if not as “free”.

- C. “We need the increased county tax money...” Yes, but we won’t get any. Foreign payment of property taxes is nice -- even a badly negotiated payment in lieu of taxes. However, according to Kathlyn Keene’s testimony at the hearing (which can certainly be verified from other records), only the local town residents where the wind farm is located will see any direct tax benefits. This would be the classic “sell out” to foreign monies for short-term gains. On this reasoning, perhaps New Hampshire should advertise itself as the “dumping ground” for all sorts of disgusting project disasters, as long as the locals get some tax benefits and the state gets its cut. As local property values plummet, the developers could simply inject more tax money, at least until it is no longer economical to invest in New Hampshire projects.

Similarly, it is unclear that county or state taxpayers will see ANY recapture of the millions of utility dollars paid for construction, operation and maintenance of the existing power loop that could become fully loaded by power generated at the wind farm (were it to live up

to proposed expectations). If GRP were to offer to purchase and install its own transmission lines to Massachusetts (or wherever), this might be less of an issue, as the capital investment would naturally become the burden of the investors, not the tax-payers. However, even then we may well lose many of the tourists and the dollars they bring for goods and services, as well as state “meals and rooms” taxes, which are essential to the surrounding economy. Who can estimate the net loss?

- D. “Some people think wind towers are pleasant to look at...” Really? Do a million people a year come to visit the White Mountain National Forest and related destinations to see if there is a wind farm they can take pictures of? There is certainly no proof in the record that any such thing could happen. As mentioned, the voters in the Town of Jefferson do not believe wind farms belong here, in a town having a historic view of the Presidential Range and the Dartmouth Range. When view-seeking transplants pull up their stakes on high-valued properties and move to greener pastures, they leave a glut of over-priced properties on the market. People who can afford to choose a view will naturally choose to move away from a bad view; property taxes decline as fair market value erodes. As Kathlyn Keene stated, in her experience as a professional real estate appraiser, the property values “certainly will not go up”, in view of an industrial wind farm. It would be much wiser to forever preserve the legacy of wilderness views, rather than to hope our grandchildren will become jaded to the loss. Forests regenerate themselves. Industrial wind farms outlive their usefulness, die, and have to be removed someday.
- E. “Wind power is clean...” Not really. One unintended consequence of building a wind farm is to subsidize on-going air pollution caused by coal-fired and fossil-fuel-fired plants upwind of here. They will buy the “Green Energy Credits” from the wind developers, giving them a license to continue their polluting ways. Perhaps the extraordinary subsidies for wind energy developments belie the advantages; if they’re so “wonderful” then they should pay for themselves.

As a related issue, many believe incorrectly that wind energy for “40,000 homes” will somehow reduce our reliance upon foreign fuels. In fact, such ill-informed supporters may be surprised to learn that wind energy is so unpredictable and so unreliable (and so inconsequential) that at least THE SAME amount of coal and oil will continue to be burned (at nearly full power) so that those 40,000 homes don’t suddenly go dark when the wind shifts or stops. Peak demand coincides poorly with peak wind production.

Although future developments of wind-harvesting may turn out to be more efficient, predictable and reliable, peppering our wild northern landscapes today with obsolete and inefficient technology will only serve to undermine and delay the market need for any improved technologies. Perhaps wind farms of this generation belong in regions where they really have few immediate alternatives, unlike here, where we have bio-mass, hydro-electric, and nuclear plants already on the ground and running.

In summary, the proposed GRP wind farm will not resolve any economic problems for Coos County, wind energy is certainly not “free”, the project will result in a net loss of new long-lasting jobs, will discourage other labor-supporting alternatives, and will not provide “clean” power or offset foreign oil reliance. The GRP project will burden the local citizens who will have to live with its implications for generations yet unborn not to mention pay more for electricity.

Many of the popular arguments to the contrary are either illogical, based upon wrong information, or perhaps “wishful thinking”. When it has come to a vote, local voters have said “NO” to wind energy systems in Jefferson. Unfortunately, the Unincorporated Places have little if any population capable of meaningful objection. Thank goodness you and your committee are there to protect them, and (by extension) all of us.

As you are already well aware of the horrible aesthetic impact as well as the potential environmental destruction, and questionable engineering and financial condition of the project, and in view of the total absence of any justification for this wind farm project, I trust that you and the committee will find it unreasonable to permit this (and perhaps any wind energy) project to go forward at this time.

We look forward to the results of your careful and studied evaluation of the pertinent factors. Thank you for taking the time to give this letter all due consideration.

Regards,

Barry C. Nelson  
(representing himself and no other agency or client)

Licensed MA Attorney, Retired electrical engineer,  
Registered Patent Attorney, Certified Professional Logger (not by trade), Certified NH Firefighter