

**THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
BEFORE THE  
NEW HAMPSHIRE  
SITE EVALUATION COMMITTEE  
DOCKET NO. 2010-01  
APPLICATION OF GROTON WIND, LLC  
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF SITE AND FACILITY  
PREFILED DIRECT TESTIMONY OF CHERYL LEWIS, INTERVENOR**

**Background and Education**

My name is Cheryl Lewis and I live at and own the Baker River Campground, located at 56 Campground Road in Rumney, NH. I am strongly opposed to the Groton Wind Farm project and have become an intervenor in the hopes the SEC will truly consider all of the facts, data and potential negative impacts to the Baker River Valley. My home and business are 1.3 miles from the project site, as stated in the Applicant's studies. I believe I will be significantly impacted if this project is approved.

I hold a Master's degree in Business Administration and an Undergraduate degree in Business Studies, both obtained at Southern New Hampshire University. My work experience includes Business Manager and Controller for two companies employing between 25-75 people, prior to purchasing the campground in May 2006. I have been an active member of this community I love; volunteering at the school, currently an elected member of the Planning Board and being involved in various aspects of the town whenever I am able to do so.

**Potential Impacts - Sound**

Potential impacts to my property include sound issues, environmental issues, property value reduction, in addition to temporary impacts during the construction phase. Each of these impacts will negatively

affect the business operation of the campground and could financially devastate it. Although the Applicant has submitted a number of studies, claiming insignificant or no impact from the project, I believe many of the studies are inadequate or faulty.

First, I have marketed my campground to rock climbers and families, listening to their needs and expectations and making business decisions to cater to them. Many of my rock climber customers come from hundreds of miles away, for the challenge and enjoyment of climbing at the premier sports climbing area in the Northeast – Rumney Rocks. I now consider many climbers friends, who travel every single weekend from Canada to Rumney, to rock climb and tent at the campground. Over the years I have gotten to know and trust some enough that they have brought my children with them and taught them to climb. Others travel regularly from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and elsewhere. The climbers expend a great amount of energy climbing during the day. When they come back to the campground in the early evening, they enjoy the river and then generally go to sleep early to rest for the next day of climbing. I have continued to increase the customer base of rock climbers each year, by recognizing and meeting their specific needs.

The families that stay at the campground enjoy the no-frill camping experience, preferring instead to focus on the beautiful Baker River, picturesque mountain views and the new friends they make who appreciate the natural environment as they do. Many of our families return year after year, and often I hear adults telling their young children the experiences they had at “camp” here when they were young. The families love to tent in the beach sites, where they are as close as possible to the river, yet enjoy a quiet, restful sleep. Many of the families plan trips down the Baker River by kayak, canoe or tube. Although the rock climbers and families have some varied needs, their commonality rests in an informal atmosphere which provides a quiet nighttime setting for peaceful sleeping in tents or campers. At times they can hear the traffic on Route 25, but fortunately it significantly decreases at night and does not affect their ability to sleep. In addition, many are used to sleeping with a certain level of vehicular noise, and therefore do not find it disturbing. The Groton Wind Farm Project has the potential to change the ability of my campers to sleep at night, the potential to change the water quality of the river, the drinking water and the beauty of the area. The Groton Wind Farm Project has the potential to destroy everything my husband and I have worked for in building the business.

The Applicant has produced sound studies, the closest of which was done at Plain Jane’s Diner, just off Route 25. This particular sound location was done at the parking lot, where trucks idle, customers park their vehicles, slam their car doors and talk. These loud noises create an inaccurate ambient noise base of which the Applicant will then compare the turbine sounds to, allowing the turbine noise to be at a much higher level than what should be acceptable. In one of my data requests, I respectfully asked the Applicant to provide a sound study at my campground. They responded they had already conducted a “robust” sampling of 6 locations. I found this to be quite inappropriate, as the responsibility of not impacting abutters and outside of the project area is theirs. At the technical session I requested again

they conduct the sound study from my property. Mr. Cherian first responded that the studies were too costly, but later responded if the Applicant and Counsel for the Public can reach an agreement as to Mr. Tocci and Epsilon conducting joint studies, then my property would be one of the locations chosen to study. I am hopeful Mr. Cherian will follow through on this statement.

During the technical session I asked Mr. Cherian if Iberdrola would be willing to comply with the same guidelines which the State of Vermont issued for Iberdrola's Deerfield Wind, LLC. He stated his company would only comply with the guidelines that the State of New Hampshire requires of them. The Deerfield Wind, LLC must construct and operate the wind farm so as not to exceed sound levels of 45 dBA(exterior)(Leq)(1hr) or 30 dBA(interior bedrooms)(Leq)(1hr). Given that my customers sleep in tents it is considered their "interior bedroom", and I believe if approved, the Groton Wind Farm sound levels should not exceed 30 dBA in my campground.

#### **Potential Impacts – Visual**

In addition to the sound impacts this project could have on my business, I believe the visual impacts could affect it as well. Much of my customer base is from urban areas. They flee the city to enjoy the beauty of the mountains and the unspoiled vast ridgelines. They leave a world that has been created totally by man, to reach a place they can still feel a part of nature. Decimating the ridgelines to build 24 wind turbines would certainly negatively impact my customer's camping experience. Many of my repeat campers request specific campsites based solely on the view. Although the Applicant has produced visual impact surveys, new technology is not always accurate. After communicating with a Lempster property owner, the preconstruction visual study determined 3 turbines would be seen from their property. Unfortunately, eight turbines are actually visible.

The visual simulations conducted use a rating system that can be subjective, as admitted by John Hecklau during the technical session. It was brought out that the picture taken from Rattlesnake Mountain(Viewpoint 14) which obviously should have a high composite contrast rating, was only rated 2.6 out of a possible 4.0.(See Vol III, Appendix 24, pg 101). This specific determination makes the entire study questionable. Although the description of the view in the study clearly describes a strong visual contrast of the wind turbines within the landscape, the assessor refuses to rate it in an appropriate manner, thereby reducing the overall visual impact and in effect, nullifying the entire study.

Rumney has a great amount of historical basis to the town, as the historic architectural survey has indicated. Although further work is ongoing for these studies, with the number of older homes in town, the aesthetic impact will be significant for many who own property in town. Although the visual simulation study has reported a minimal impact, I do not agree. First, as previously stated, I do not believe the accuracy of the study. Second, the aesthetics have a much more negative impact on tourists who are here to enjoy the beauty of the land. Third, many homeowners still appreciate the beauty of

the land too, even if they have been here their entire lives. The potential contrast of the wind turbines and the ridgelines will have a negative impact on many who live here.

Again, in my data requests, I respectfully requested visual simulations be conducted at the intervenors properties. The Applicant objected that this request was overly burdensome. With all due respect, this intervenor finds this process to be quite burdensome, in the amount of time, energy and loss of revenue it has already taken of me, just to be involved in this process. The Applicant then stated he would provide visual simulations at our expense, at \$1000 each. This process has already been an expense to my business, and defending our businesses and properties from this project should not be cost prohibitive.

#### **Potential Impacts – Water Quality and Contamination**

Another major concern I have regarding this project is the potential contamination of the aquifer in the town of Rumney and eventually my well. I own a community well on my property which is registered with the State and supports both year-round and seasonal residents. I feel a deep sense of obligation in owning this well and providing many people with quality drinking water. The well is tested twice yearly for the State and inspected by them regularly. Blasting for the Project could impact the aquifer, which is a very real possibility given the fact the aquifer is under Groton Hollow Road and travels throughout the village area, down Quincy Road and includes my property. The extreme blasting that will need to be done for the turbine pads, as well as the privately owned portion of Groton Hollow Road could change the subsurface water tables, the Clarks Brook watershed or worse, contaminate them. If the aquifer is contaminated will Iberdrola be responsible for the drinking water for many residents of Rumney? As the owner of a community well, I am concerned of my liability to those that use my well. What guarantee or protection will I have that my well will not be affected in any way by this project?

Mr. Michael Leo, employee of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., is the senior civil engineer for the Groton Wind Farm Project. At the technical session, when asked if he had experience in working on this type of project, he stated he worked on a home in Waterville Valley that was on a steep slope. With all due respect, a project of this magnitude requires an engineer with experience in facing the many challenges this type of project will bring. I am not comfortable with the idea that roads, erosion control measures and storm run-off analysis have been designed by an engineer without a proven track record of a specialty project of this nature. Designing one or even several homes on a mountain, have far less potential of impacting the abutters, the subsurface and surface waters, the aquifer and the natural environment than a project of this size and complexity.

At the Maple Ridge Wind Farm in Martinsburg, New York, owned by Iberdrola, three separate transformer failures have resulted in transformer oil contaminating the site. The New York State

Department of Conservation approved of the plan of an investigation by the Plumley Engineering Company, hired by the Owners. A property owner claims their well was contaminated by the incidents, however, Iberdrola has not claimed responsibility. The risk of well contamination for me and other residents of Rumney is significant.

**Potential Impacts – Property Values**

For the reasons listed above, I believe my property value will decrease if the Groton Wind Farm is built. If the sound from the turbines impacts my business, its value will most certainly decrease. If the Baker River is in any way impacted by the Project, the value of my business will decrease. If the aquifer is affected in any way by the Project, the value of my business will decrease. Campgrounds values are generally based on the average annual revenue, and therefore decreases in the revenue due to impacts such as those discussed, will reduce the overall property value of the business. Just the potential risk of these impacts reduces the value of my property. My property falls within the viewshed of this Project and at this time the simulation provided to me since the technical session shows a number of the turbines will be visible from my property. The Ben Hoen study which the Applicant has submitted, in my opinion, is faulty in many aspects. Mike McCann, certified appraiser has reviewed this study and has found many problems with the analysis.

Respectfully submitted,

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Cheryl L. Lewis, Intervenor

I hereby certify that, on the date written below, I sent by electronic mail or U.S. mail, postage prepaid, to the persons on the service list(exclusive of Committee members), as well as the original and nine copies to Jane Murray.

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Date

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Cheryl L. Lewis