

Supplemental Testimony of Jean Vissering

For

Peter Roth, Counsel for the Public, New Hampshire Department of Justice

What is the purpose of your supplemental testimony?

To state my observations and opinions about the effects of certain mitigating factors that have been announced since my original testimony, including the conservation property package, and the considerations made by the agreement with the AMC.

Are you familiar with Antrim Wind's proposals regarding conservation easements?

Yes, I have read the proposal in detail as described in Filing "120604 easements." This filing was dated June 4, 2012 and includes proposed deeds and a map of the proposed easements.

Would the proposed easements change your findings and conclusions as described in your visual assessment report?

No they would not. Please note that additional conservation measures were noted as one of several recommendations which together would be necessary for the project to avoid an unreasonable adverse effect on the aesthetics. Even with the removal of the two southernmost turbines and the introduction of most nighttime hazard lighting (through radar activated lighting control) the project would result in an unreasonable adverse effect on aesthetics.

Please describe your understanding of the conservation easements proposed by Antrim Wind.

Antrim Wind has agreements with four property owners to provide varying degrees of conservation. The four properties are currently owned by Michael J. Ott (150 acres), Paul and Helen Wittemore (110 acres), Steven R. Cotram (130 acres), and Lyle J. and Anne J. Micheli (295 acres). These properties totaling 685 acres would be transferred to the Harris Center for Conservation Education which would manage portions of the properties that are not reserved for residential use or for the wind energy project. Antrim Wind or its subsidiaries would have rights for up to 50 for use of the entire ridgeline including turbines, met towers, associated roads, work areas, collector line corridors, and access roads. The access road could continue in use up to and including the Ott property. Beyond the Ott property line the road would be discontinued after 50

years. In addition each property owner would reserve rights for future development including residential structures, outbuildings and access roads. There are no restrictions for either future expansion of the wind project (e.g. road widening or extension), or for the locations of the homes. Only a portion of the 685 acres would be conserved solely for conservation. [The following sentence was based on my memory of what the applicant said at the technical hearing; the previous sentence is a suggested replacement; eliminate if this doesn't contribute anything.] It was estimated by the applicant that only 400 of the 685 acres could be considered unrestricted conservation.

Please describe why these conservation measures would be insufficient to avoid an unreasonable adverse effect on aesthetics.

Conservation is currently proposed on only four of the six lots involved in the project, and on only a portion of the ridgeline. The Tuttle to Willard ridgeline now provides an important aesthetic contribution to Antrim and the surrounding region, and several of the higher summits are not included within the proposed easement. As noted in my report, as well as the applicant's visual assessment, the project would be visible from most of the region's lakes and ponds and higher elevation summits accessible by trail. The wind project could remain in existence for up to 50 years. Within that 50 years larger turbines may be installed as the project is repowered, necessitating potentially additional clearing and grading. Additional houses and outbuildings could create additional impacts to the now largely undeveloped ridge. There are no limitations specified as to the location of structures other than that they need to be located within a certain distance of each other. Visual impacts from the project as well as potentially from future buildings could exist for 50 years or more. Proposed decommissioning would not restore the ridgeline, but only remove the structures and provide minimal revegetation. Real conservation would be limited primarily to some of the side slopes outside of residential development areas.

The Willard to Tuttle ridgeline is specifically noted as a high priority for conservation both at the local and regional levels. The Antrim Open Space Conservation Plan (a public document approved by the Select Board) identifies this area as important for its significant values as a wildlife corridor and unfragmented habitat but also for aesthetic values. The project ridge is also identified as an important conservation corridor in the Quabbin to Cardigan Initiative (Q2C).

The project itself will result in significant impacts to these priority conservation areas both in terms of habitat fragmentation and aesthetic impacts to the region. Benefits of the proposed conservation easements would be very limited in comparison with the impacts of the project. The project would remain for up to 50 years and beyond this time restoration would be minimal leaving the regraded landscape in place. Even beyond 50 years, portions of the project road will be visible from Goodhue Hill (Simulation 2B). Residential structures, outbuildings and access roads can be added with limited restrictions on their locations. The proposed conservation

measures would not provide for adequate mitigation addressing impacts to the aesthetic quality of the area or to documented conservation priorities. The applicant specifically states that the conservation proposed should not be considered as mitigation.

Additional conservation measures will be required. These measures need to address the ridgeline as a whole and to insure that any future development is not located within the more visually and ecologically sensitive higher elevation areas. Additional conservation beyond ridgeline and high elevation areas should be considered within the priority blocks identified in the Antrim Open Space Conservation Plan.

Does the radar controlled night lighting agreed to by the applicant in the agreement with the AMC sufficiently mitigate the adverse impacts of the project on aesthetics?

Answer: No it does not. First, the proposal is contingent on FAA approval for this technology for use in this project. The approval can be made in the future or not at all. Given the high visibility of the project from many sensitive sites, many of which are used at night or when lights would be operational, even the temporary use of night lighting would result in unreasonable visual impacts. In addition, the radar controlled lighting system is only one of several conditions which would need to be met in order to adequately mitigate the aesthetic impacts of the proposed project.

What about the expansion of the viewshed analysis to 10 miles?

Answer: The expanded viewshed analysis identifies approximately 33 additional recreational or cultural sites with potential visibility. I have not at this time been able to review these sites in detail.

As I previously discussed in my original testimony, the identification of the additional resources affected by the Project further supports my conclusion that the Project has an unreasonable adverse impact on the aesthetics in and around Antrim.