

NH Site Evaluation Committee

Docket 2015-2

Antrim Wind Project

Members,

I want to thank you for first accepting the monumental task of determining if the Antrim site is acceptable for a wind facility. Second I'd like to thank you for allowing me to intervene in the process. I'm convinced that the Antrim Select Board made the correct decision in asking you to oversee the process. As committed as these individuals are. I don't see our elected officials assimilating all the information presented at the hearings.

As a long term supporter of this project, I have made it my mission to find out as much as possible about living and recreating in proximity to a wind facility. I have tried to experience all the effects related to wind power generation. I have shared that information with the committee.

My intent is to remind the committee of the facts pertaining to siting and operation of a wind facility in Antrim operated by Walden Green Energy/ Antrim Wind Energy LLC. This information was gleaned from testimony from the hearings.

I believe the most important document for the committee to consider is the irrevocable letter of credit for the decommissioning of the project. With this guarantee the town is protected from liability to remove the project for any reason.

WGE/AWE has put together a team of qualified contractors and suppliers. They have experience constructing wind facilities. They are familiar with the technical aspects and regulations required to install this project. Seimens is supplying state of the art turbines. The newest technology combined with a maintenance and operations contract assures us of safe and efficient operation.

Lempster town officials have stated that there have not been any negative economic impacts to their town. People still hunt and fish. All the homes near the wind facility are occupied except one. This house has been vacant for years. I have no knowledge of its' history. Many people go to Lempster to view the turbines. I believe this will hold true for Antrim.

Questions about White Birch Point were raised. The committee visited this area. It might (or might not) qualify for some historical recognition. This process has been ongoing for the better part of 7yrs. Not until late in this preceding have we heard from this community. The project will be visible from some locations with-in this area.

WGE/AWE has agreed to post construction bird studies to accompany the preconstruction studies. They have agreed to conditions for avian protection. The facility has met DES requirements for run-off and water quality. There are no streams in the proposed site and wetlands were avoided. The entire facility will require 59+- acres of disturbance reduced to 11.25 acres for operation. The grid infrastructure exists at the foot of the facility requiring minimal additional tie-in construction.

The overwhelming controversy for this project once again comes from esthetics. There is no question that from some vantage points, this project will be visible. There is no way to hide a wind turbine. The very nature of the technology is to put the blades in the wind stream. The higher the blades, the more consistent the wind, the more efficient the turbine.

In Ms. Viscerings book, she describes the trend to fewer, taller, more powerful turbine facilities. This is exactly what WGE/AWE has proposed. The result is a smaller footprint with high output.

We heard from two visual impact specialists. Mr. Raphael presented his case for WGE/AWE. Not surprising, the impacts were acceptable. Questions arose about his modeling. His system has been used before and the methods accepted.

When I questioned as to why Ms. Connelly was chosen, she stated it was her education and expertise. I can't help but wonder if Counsel for the Public chose her because she would come back with a negative assessment of the project. Ms. Connelly stated that she had made no prior conclusions, but I find this extremely hard to comprehend. She also stated twice under oath that she had a "personal bias towards turbines sited on NH mountain tops". The committee should also remember that her system was created by her and this was the first time it had been implemented. With conflicting data, once again it proves that aesthetics are subjective.

It must also be noted that the impacts, sound and flicker are calculated worst case. No trees, no clouds, full sun, and flat hard ground. These conditions do not exist at this site. None of these impacts will be the norm.

Willard Pond, Willard Pond, Willard Pond. NH Audubon has stated time and again that users of the pond will be negatively impacted. Unfortunately, they have no evidence that can prove it. In reality, they have no data about any users of the resource. Can you see the wind facility from Willard? From some vantage points, yes. Will the wind facility destroy the resource? No. Question my methods if you will, but Mr. Pratts and my attempt to collect data, was intended to shed actual information from users of the resource.

We heard emotional testimony from abutters, non-abutters and Stoddard Conservation. Once again the predominant complaint is that the facility can be seen. Some will hear the turbines and some will experience shadow flicker. The truth is, there are thousands of turbines located worldwide. Many of them are located with residences nearby. WGE/AWE has met all the required rules for siting this facility. While some may be annoyed with the presence of the facility, others welcome it. There are systems in place to assure those affected have an outlet to meet their concerns.

There was much made about wind ordinances in Antrim. Several times ordinances were put before the voters. Too strict. Not strict enough. One put forward by the developer. No ordinance was passed by the voters. The only real information that can be believed is page 4 of exhibit LA 8. At the bottom of the page a clear majority voted to allow wind facilities in the Rural Conservation District. This was not endorsed by the planning board but easily passed. There was no confusion about what this ordinance meant. This allows for wind facilities with safeguards to be constructed in the RCD. A clear majority.

Let me take this opportunity to express that Council for the Public has never represented the public that supports this project. Surely there must be some merits that deserved public council.

I have a huge burden on my shoulders. I'm the only intervener in support of this project that has actively participated throughout this hearing. In a sea of opposition, I hope fact and reason, have equal weight against emotion and fear.

As you embark on the final decision process for this project, please take these thoughts into consideration. This project will be visible. We need this impact to raise awareness of how we generate power. The status quo is no longer acceptable. All energy generation has impacts.

Splitting atoms, mining and burning coal or fracking for natural gas to boil water to spin turbines to generate power is ludicrous. The ramifications of this process becomes more evident every day. We are literally killing the earth. By erecting a pole with a propeller on top, we can limit the amount of power needed from these other sources. As small as this project is, it powers 13000+- homes for the next 40+- years with emission free power.

The largest NH solar array, in Peterborough NH, takes up several acres and only generates enough power to offset the municipal buildings in that town. While we need all the solar installations we can construct, they are much better suited to home generation systems. For large scale power generation, we need larger scale generation systems, such as the WGE/AWE will provide.

If the goal of 25 by 25 has been met, we should strive for 50 by 25. New Hampshire should be taking a leadership role. Let's hope in the next 40 yrs some major breakthrough develops. Until then, we must take every opportunity to reduce our carbon footprint, personally and commercially.

The impact area is small. Infrastructure improvements are minimal. Power generation is significant. Permanent ridgetop conservation land is more than most conservationists could hope for. This project has a finite lifespan. This alone makes it unique. Many conservation groups have endorsed the project. If this is not the best sited wind facility, every other site will come with the same objections.

As citizens of this planet, we have an obligation to future generations, to leave it in the best condition that knowledge and technology will allow. Ignorance and selfishness have no place at this critical time. The window is short to make decisions that could change the viability of the earth as we know it.

As committee members, you face a task that will devastate one side or the other. Deny the application and you strike a fatal blow to wind generation in NH. Approve the application and big money wins again against the little person. Put conditions on the project as you see fit but please don't deny future generations the potential of a cleaner, safer planet.

Respectfully,

Wes Enman