

Final 2015-02 SEC Brief
Stoddard Conservation Commission
November 20, 2016

The Stoddard conservation commission believes that there is no significant difference in the environmental impacts between the 2015 Docket submitted by AWE and the 2012 Docket, which was denied. We believe that the 2015 Docket should be **denied** for the following additional reasons:

1. Six conservation groups and two state agencies have engaged in a 40+ year effort to identify and protect over 40,000 acres of contiguously protected lands adjacent to and surrounding the proposed AWE wind farm. Preserving large, unfragmented forest blocks from further development is central to the mission of each group. The organizations involved include the following: Society for the Protection of NH Forests, NH Audubon, Harris Center, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands, Sweet Water Trust, NH Fish & Game Dept., and the NH Division of Forest and Lands. Millions of dollars of private and public funds have been spent on this initiative. Allowing the AWE wind farm to be developed would undermine the conservation and aesthetic values of this effort. Furthermore, these lands lie in the heart of the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Initiative (Q2C), a two state effort to protect ecologically significant forests in central New England. Habitat conservation in this region is a high priority for both the Massachusetts and New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plans, and the region's interconnected forests could also prove an important north-south corridor for wildlife adapting their ranges to a changing climate. Its managed timberlands are an important source of forest products and renewable energy, and are a highly-efficient carbon sink. **Please deny this project on these grounds alone;**

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2. The NH Fish & Game's Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) is a public/private effort to identify critical habitat throughout the state that is necessary for not only species of concern, but for all wildlife, to thrive/survive in a state that continues to see 10 to 15,000 acres of forest and agricultural land lost to development each year. The WAP has ranked the AWE wind farm site as the highest ranking habitat (confirmed by field visits by the Stoddard con com AND from GPS collared bobcats in the UNH/F&G bobcat study). This cooperative effort between state agencies, conservation groups, and academia has cost over one million dollars in public and private funds. Its purpose is to guide land use decisions so that critical wildlife habitat is NOT developed. The SEC is a prime example of decision makers this plan was intended for: **Please honor the WAP by denying this project!** (NH wildlife biologists say that this high ranking is grounds enough to deny the project);

3. Master plans are the icon of local control and citizen involvement! The Antrim master plan identified the northwest part of town as important open space and zoned it rural/conservation. The Antrim selectmen's action is contrary to and in violation of this important local planning initiative. Please honor and restore the integrity of the town's master plan effort by denying this project;

4. We all want to mitigate the insidious impacts of greenhouse gases and climate change. Forests play a key role in sequestering carbon and moderating temperatures. It is critical that large, unfragmented forest blocks remain free of incremental development in order to maintain their ecological integrity and economic and operational viability. Forest fragmentation (converting forests to non-forest use with roads, transmission

52 lines, subdivisions, commercial/industrial development) degrades wildlife habitat, leads
53 to loss of biodiversity, increases invasive plants, insects, and pathogens AND threatens
54 the health, function, and value of the remaining forest! Forest health depends upon
55 maintaining ecological health, of which apex predators are a critical part. The AWE
56 wind farm is being proposed in habitat that the WAP has identified as being core habitat
57 for apex predators (bobcats, bear, coyotes, fisher). The biggest threat to their habitat is
58 fragmentation, which projects like the proposed AWE farm are a poster child of. **Please**
59 **deny this project in recognition of the importance** of these large forest blocks in
60 mitigating climate change;

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62 5. The Stoddard conservation commission (with over 100 years of applied, practical
63 natural resource experience) and the selectmen stand unanimous and united in their
64 opposition to the AWE wind farm, because of the threat to the conservation values of
65 protected lands in Stoddard (65% of the town's area) and the surrounding towns;

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67 6. Tuttle Hill is a marginal wind site at best; wind energy is a marginal energy source
68 with 30% efficiency/reliability, at best! It requires a constant standby of conventional
69 energy sources to compensate for wind lulls (coal, oil, natural gas, hydro); it poses a
70 tremendous challenge to those who manage the grid!


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72 7. If we believe that wind farms should be a viable part of our renewable energy
73 portfolio, then they should be **sited on ridges where they pose the least**
74 **environmental threat, not the greatest.** Locating a wind farm on Tuttle Hill would
75 pose a huge threat to the current and future conservation values and efforts in this area,
76 for all of the aforementioned reasons.

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The Stoddard conservation commission recognizes that "in the field of conservation, victories are temporary; defeat is permanent" and that we need to be eternally vigilant in protecting the conservation and aesthetic values of this region from ill-sited development projects, of which this is one. Mitigation is not an option in this case!

The Stoddard conservation commission respectfully requests that the AWE wind farm (Docket 2015-02) be denied for any one or all of the above reasons.

Respectfully submitted,



Geoffrey T. Jones, chair (licensed professional forester #151)