

Bill Cundiff

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Subject: the truth

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Concerns for the proposed Massaemet wind farm

By Walter Cudnohufsky, Shelburne Falls & West County Independent, 16 September 2011

Shelburne and Buckland residents (and those beyond) have the legitimate right and absolute responsibility to question and challenge the proposed Mt. Massaemet wind farm.

Zoning Board of Appeals member Ted Merrill is correct in his statement “this is a major decision that the Town should make at town meeting ... ” this may be among the most important decisions your town ever faces. The impact will be for generations to come! This industrial scale prominent wind installation with its elevated presence will necessarily change the character of this region. This proposal should be a multi town or even a regional decision.

Quoting from the August 2011 *Ashfield News* eloquent and thoughtful statement by Richard Todd about proposed industrial wind in Ashfield.

“Here is what troubles me about the debate so far: we seem to be so ready to devalue the ground we stand on. In the interest of an uncertain good - ‘clean energy’ - we are ready to sacrifice some very real, present and tangible goods. ‘Our hands are dirty,’ someone said at a recent meeting, and asked why given our complicity in a polluting society we had the right to live in a ‘bucolic village.’ This is a serious question. But I ask in return: what gives us the right to destroy that village?”

“To think as I do, of course, opens one to the charge of being that much loathed figure, the Nimby. The immediate point is that our backyard is well worth defending. To begin with, it is not just our backyard; it is a place whose value transcends its worth to us, a resource for the whole of the state and the region. The hills of western Massachusetts shelter a culture that deserves protection. We are inheritors of generations of stewardship of the land. We live in one of those increasingly rare places where the human presence has not destroyed but has, for the most part, enhanced the environment. Our society needs this model far more than it needs more kilowatts, however ‘cleanly’ they are generated. If we are thinking of our responsibility to the world, I suggest that we can enact it best by tending first to our own corner of the world. We delude ourselves in thinking that we can do anything very significant toward ‘saving the planet.’ But we can at least save something of the planet by respecting the place where we live.”

With Richards’ insight, we have an obligation to our special place and community in our incredible region, to ask discerning questions and demand complete, logical and documented answers. Boilerplate statistics and platitudes generated by the wind

industry's paid consultants must not suffice. Take action by attending and/or hosting neighborhood meetings, going to town meetings.

Make no mistake, this proposal for a Massaemet industrial wind installation is not confined to the few hundred acres and several cooperating properties. The proposal permanently and necessarily borrows heavily, without compensation from all of us — especially those within one and one half miles from those proposed turbine properties.

Please remember some basic facts,

- Wind has no dependable load capacity or value to the grid because of its erratic unpredictable nature. This means that industrial wind will not offset the need for conventional sources of electricity production. Please review Denmark's 20 years of experience, View Searsburg, VT performance over the past several years.
- Wind is marginal in this region, notwithstanding Mr. Field's quoted casual and to be documented statement that "there is adequate enough wind for the project to proceed."
- Turbine generated infrasound (not the more commonly discussed decibels) will disturb, disrupt and cause health problems for many of those attempting to sleep within 1.50 miles of these machines.
- Shelburne Falls is a quiet community with a similar nighttime baseline ambient sound in the low 20 decibels as has been documented in Ashfield. Raising the DCB by just six or more decibels is the essential equivalent of doubling sound that reaches the human ear. The perceived human impact is exaggerated especially in quieter locations such as our region. Most, if not all, existing industrial wind turbines are simply not able to achieve or stay within the low 30 decibels in sound production. The noise and health impacts of industrial wind turbines are a focus of worldwide discussion of what is now labeled a "health calamity." Many countries worldwide are significantly increasing the required setback from habitable buildings to any turbine to 1.25-1.5 miles. In some cases, it is three miles.
- Industrial wind machines are actually a net financial negative for taxpayers and consumers. Their heavy subsidies (approximately 200 times other energy source subsidies) tax write-offs, grants, production tax credits, the selling of carbon credits, accelerated depreciation, etc., are the only things that make them viable. The kilowatt-hour cost of wind electricity is far higher than conventionally produced power. It is we the taxpayers who are footing the bill for a technology that has numerous proven downsides and is at minimum, of questionable effectiveness. It will necessarily exact heavy financial and other costs from our region.

As a possible help and jumpstart to your inevitable list of questions, here are a few you should seek answers to:

- What sources, studies, facts, authors and authorities have led you to the conclusion that industrial wind does work as proclaimed?

- To not make our community an expanded and unwilling “risk partner” to your proposed enterprise, identify the guaranteed employment and other annual economic contributions to be delivered to this community regardless if it is a bad wind year, such as England has just experienced.

Once installed, the turbines’ negative impacts on our most cherished elevated landscapes will likely be scarred for generations.

Shelburne citizens and beyond, consider holding yourselves open to the possibility that “industrial wind simply does not work” or “does not work efficiently enough” to warrant approving this or any similar project.

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