

Bill Cundiff

From: Robert Anders
Sent: Thursday, October 27, 2011 4:35 PM
To: Bill Cundiff; SZisk@douglasma.org; Mlajoie@douglasma.org
Subject: wind siting bogus bill

[Wind Watch: Legislators get an earful at contentious Cape turbine hearing](#)



October 22, 2011

Massachusetts

Legislators get an earful at contentious Cape turbine hearing

By Rich Eldred, Cape Codder, www.wickedlocal.com 21 October 2011

BREWSTER — The state is late to the party when it comes to setting rules for wind energy development, too late to bother, many Cape Codders told a state’s joint committee on telecommunications, utilities and energy Thursday morning at Barnstable High.

But developers are tired of wading through a jungle of local boards and are “seeking one-stop shopping.”

The upshot of this is a slew of nine bills, two of which (S. 1666 and H. 1775) are designed to draw up state standards and streamline the permitting process for land based wind turbines in Massachusetts. The Thursday morning hearing drew lots of people from both sides, as well as almost all the local legislators.

Local opponents of the various Cape Cod wind projects are not happy about the idea of new state (suggested) guidelines for two-megawatt projects, streamlined local siting boards and a new appeals process.

“I don’t believe the town of Barnstable needs these standards, your goals or your authority,” declared Barnstable town councilor Ann Canedy. “We have a wind ordinance in place in Barnstable. I know that because I helped write it. We also have the Cape Cod Commission and I think they’re very capable of creating regulatory standards and bylaws.”

The hearing covered all the bills, most of which fine-tuned rules or dealt with specific cases, but the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act drew most of the fire and support.

State legislation has set a goal of 2000 megawatts of clean energy production by 2020 – which would mean 250 to 300 turbines built along the coast or in the Berkshires.

“We cannot allow those fundamentally opposed to wind generated energy per say to thwart the commonwealth,” declared Barbara Kates-Garnick, the under secretary for energy and environmental affairs. “The Berkshire project took 13 years to get approval.”

She said the bill would provide a predictable “one-stop” permitting process through local 3-5 person town siting boards.

“There is nothing in this bill, and I mean nothing, that will permit projects to move forward without local approval,” she said. “The Patrick and Murray administration thinks siting will be improved through the passage of this bill.”

“No one should insult the members by saying this bill enhances local control,” countered former state rep. Eric Turkington. “We know it does not, otherwise we wouldn’t have the bill. The purpose of the bill is to avoid local control and create a set of state standards so wind developers will have a clear path.”

There was some disagreement about whether the town siting boards were mandatory or voluntary – apparently the house and senate versions differ.

“Given the efficiency and cost of solar panels, they cost 40 percent less than a year ago to produce, seeing prices drop dramatically in the last year, has this goal moved with that?” asked rep Randy Hunt of Sandwich..

“That’s a market that has to develop. The goals for solar are much lower than wind. If the market favors solar that’s something we’ll see but wind is the resource we have in Massachusetts, especially on Cape Cod and in the Berkshires,” Kates-Garnick said. “So wind is endemic to the state.”

“I hope you are cognizant that on Cape we have resources of natural beauty, the skyline and the seashore,” state rep. Sarah Peake answered to loud applause.

Senator Dan Knapik of western Mass. wondered if the 2000-megawatt goal was realistic.

“We have enabling legislation that set very ambitious goals,” Kates-Garnick conceded. “The legislation you’re looking at is a piece of the process to getting to those goals.”

But others were not enthused about one-stop predictability.

Canedy noted the law says the new one-stop boards would “consider’ the opinions of other local commissions.

“That insinuates a subordination of those organizations,” she said. “This bill is making a wink and a nod to local authorities.”

“This bill will effectively strip local authorities of decision making,” ventured Tom Guerino, town administrator of Bourne. “Bourne has passed a very comprehensive wind bylaw and passed a solar bylaw last night.”

“In Orleans we have a process,” agreed selectman Dave Dunford. “We’re all working together and it works well. I don’t see how this bill fixes anything.”

The state would also devise a set of model rules for turbines and solar arrays.

“The bill tries to create uniform standards and allows for towns not to get mired in the process of developing their own standards,” assistant secretary Steven Clark said.

“The Cape Cod Commission has established minimum standards for wind turbines. We have predictable and clear standards across the county. There is no need for a state set of standards,” Mitch Relin of Brewster pointed out.

Towns could adopt their own rules but if there was an appeal then those standards might be compared against the state’s set.

There were supporters from the industry and the Conservation Law Foundation spoke in favor.

“The status quo is not working in terms of advancing good projects,” said CLF lawyer Susan Reid. “The pace of wind energy development is not keeping up with the need. Good projects are held at bay for far too long. This bill is one we urgently need. It strikes a better balance between maintaining local authority and state control while still advancing the ball.”

A lot of locals didn’t want the ball advanced.

“WESRA undermines the very core of democracy,” Lilli Green of Wellfleet declared as she called for a one-year moratorium on turbine construction.

“I think the WESRA bill is criminal,” Linda Saloman of Harwich said. “It was written for the sole purpose of invalidating the role of local citizens.”

“This is the spearhead of the Nazi-fication of the country by corporations and government,” added Marshal Rosenthal of Savoy Ma.

“Wind One (in Falmouth) has caused physical and mental harm to 45 surrounding homes. It’s too big and too close,” said nearby resident Neil Anderson. “Two megawatt size turbines are 500 feet tall. The blades weight eight tons each. It’s like trying to put 12 beach balls in an egg carton, they will not fit (in neighborhoods).”

While several speakers cited detrimental health effects of large turbines, Dan Webb, who owns and operates a large turbine in Falmouth, scoffed at “wind turbine syndrome”.

“There is not a single scientific paper recognizing this so-called disease,” he said. “The proven risks are the result of our national addiction to fossil fuels. We should be racing to deploy wind energy systems. Cape Cod has an unusually strong wind resource.”

Why bother others wondered.

“Not one fossil fueled plant has been decommissioned due to the installation and operation of wind turbines worldwide,” said Barbara Howard of Harwich. “Wind doesn’t offer the benefits marketers promise.”



This article is provided as a service of National Wind Watch, Inc.
<http://www.wind-watch.org/news/>
The use of copyrighted material is protected by Fair Use.