

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

**Testimony of
United States Senator Richard Blumenthal
Before the Energy and Technology Committee
February 3, 2011**

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 6249, An Act Establishing a Moratorium on the Siting of Wind Projects until the Adoption of Regulations.

House Bill 6249 requires the Connecticut Siting Council to refrain from proceeding any siting of a wind turbine application until it adopts regulations for the siting of wind turbines in consultation with Department of Public Utility Control and the Department of Environmental Protection. Such regulations may include minimum distances from neighboring properties, blade shear, ice throw and light flicker. The regulations should require a public hearing on all wind turbine projects.

I am a strong supporter of federal efforts to promote the use of clean, renewable energy that will protect the environment, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and support American infrastructure, and Connecticut businesses. I am committed to helping Connecticut make the best possible use of tax incentives, including the Wind Production Tax Credit (PTC), and other grants, loan guarantees, financial assistance, education and training opportunities from the Department of Energy (DOE).

The Connecticut State Legislature is to be commended for taking such a proactive stance and for acting to address some of the issues that arise from wind energy development. There are two wind turbine applications currently pending before the Connecticut Siting Council which, if approved, would allow for the construction of these facilities without any conditions to minimize the environmental and health impacts. House Bill 6249 would require the Council to first set basic conditions that would have to be met before such an application could be approved.

Proper and fair regulations will provide much-needed clear direction for those companies willing to invest in wind power in Connecticut while minimizing the impact of wind turbine facilities on nearby properties.

This type of regulation is not novel or new. In fact, several states and countries have enacted setback distances from residential properties or public roads. It is important that we begin the implementation of renewable energy in Connecticut in a manner that is safe to the citizens who will benefit from the additions of such technologies. The use and expansion of renewable energy -- especially in Connecticut where our electricity costs are among the highest in the nation -- should not come at the expense of Connecticut, either financially or to the health of the people.

I urge favorable consideration of House Bill 6249.