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Written Testimony of Christopher Phelps, Program Director
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee

February 3, 2011

Written testimony concerning HB 6249, An Act Establishing A Moratorium On The Siting Of
Wind Projects Until The Adoption Of Regulations

Representative Nardello, Senator Fonfara, Representative Hoydick, Senator Witkos, and
members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony concerning Raised House Bill 6249. Environment Connecticut is a member-supported non-profit environmental advocacy organization. Although we agree with the need for ensuring that wind energy projects are sited pursuant to clear, predictable standards based upon best practices for such projects, we oppose this bill in its current form due to the potential for the proposed moratorium to kill currently proposed projects and prevent potential developers from pursuing additional wind energy projects in Connecticut now or in the near future.

Development of new renewable energy generation resources in Connecticut, such as wind power, is an important part of our state's efforts to cut pollution, including pollution reductions mandated under the CT Global Warming Security Act and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Additionally, development of such projects has real near-term job creating benefits in Connecticut communities.

In short, we strongly urge the committee not to enact a moratorium on wind projects as Section 2 of HB 6249 proposes. It is our view that the existing Connecticut Siting Council process for evaluating such projects can, and should, lead to the establishment of prudent standards governing siting of wind turbines. To the extent that a legislative "backstop" to enactment of such standards would be useful, we urge the legislature to work with interested stakeholders to craft a bill that accomplishes that task without resorting to the extreme of a moratorium on wind power development in Connecticut.

Regarding the specific sections of the bill:

Section 1 appears to require that wind siting standards adopted by the Siting Council must regulate a number of specific issues, such as "flicker," even if such issues are not best addressed through rigid regulatory standards. Similarly, this section appears to mandate that separate regulations be adopted for wind turbines of different sizes. Although it could be that there should be different standards for large utility scale turbines versus small turbines, the language of the bill could be interpreted as requiring separate standards for similarly sizes of utility scale turbines. – These comments could be addressed simply by "tweaking" the language of Section 1 to clarify that such issues should be *considered* when adopting siting standards, but without mandating specific

regulations governing each and every one of these issues if doing so is in fact not the best method of addressing such issues.

We oppose the proposed moratorium on wind power projects contained in Section 2 for the reasons cited earlier. It is our view that a moratorium is unnecessary at this time to achieve the goals of Section 1 of this bill. Additionally as the committee is aware, there are wind power projects currently before the siting council and a moratorium could have the effect of killing such projects and preventing the council from continuing, through its existing process and procedures, to establish prudent siting standards for these and future wind power projects in Connecticut. Finally, such a moratorium could also have the unintended consequence of signaling to developers considering other projects here that our state is not a friendly place for them to do business.

In conclusion, while we agree with the goal of ensuring that wind power projects in Connecticut are developed pursuant to standards and guidelines based on best practices incorporating experience of other states and jurisdictions, as well as ensuring local municipalities and residents have a legitimate voice in the process, we do not believe this bill in its current form the best way to achieve that goal. Environment Connecticut urges the committee not to enact a moratorium on wind power projects. Rather, we urge you to allow the existing siting council process to continue and, to the extent legislation is needed, to focus on working with all interested stakeholders to ensure that prudent siting standards are implemented without risking the unintended consequence of stopping developers from proceeding with wind power development in Connecticut now or in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony concerning Raised House Bill 6249 on behalf of our statewide membership.

Sincerely,

Christopher Phelps
Program Director
Environment Connecticut