

Testimony of Michael Dreher before the Energy and Technology Committee  
On proposed *House Bill 6249 An Act Establishing a Moratorium on the Siting of Wind  
Projects Until the Adoption of Regulations*  
Thursday, February 3, 2011

Senator Fonfara, Representative Nardello, Senator Witkos, Representative Hoydick and members of the Energy and Technology Committee, my name is Michael Dreher and I am submitting this testimony in opposition to proposed House Bill 6249 An Act Establishing a Moratorium on the Siting of Wind Projects Until the Adoption of Regulations.

I live on 2 Stonefield Drive, the next hilltop over from the proposed Wind Prospect site. According to siting maps, the wind turbines will be visible from my home. As a taxpayer, ratepayer, and lifelong resident of the Town of Prospect, I am in favor of Wind Prospect.

Wind Prospect, proposed by BNE Energy, Inc., will bring a number of significant benefits to our local community and the State of Connecticut. The benefits include much needed local tax revenue, cleaner air and water, the preservation of 67 acres of land from being developed, improved energy security and independence, clean energy funds going to in-state wind project development (i.e. jobs in Connecticut), and clean energy generation to support a starving electrical grid.

I am encouraged that our State Legislature has mandated that, by 2020, 27% of the electrical generation in our State be required to come from renewable sources. I am also encouraged that Connecticut uses a consolidated permitting process for evaluating electric generating facilities. Responsibility for review of proposed major electric generating projects, including wind projects lies with the nine-member Connecticut Siting Council.

Connecticut has established a more consistent and predictable review processes for wind projects that other economic competitor states, e.g. Massachusetts, would like to emulate. Massachusetts currently has permitting processes that make it more difficult to site renewable energy facilities than fossil fuel energy facilities. The review processes for wind projects in Connecticut include:

1. A comprehensive project review (includes input from all interested parties, public hearings, other State agencies);
2. Consolidated review and issuance of a single permit (i.e. one-stop permitting);
3. Guidelines for various technical studies;
4. Specifications and limits on allowable time periods for review; and
5. Limitation on the number of appeals.

Unlike Massachusetts, Connecticut has a permitting process that promotes renewable energy projects. In order to meet our aggressive state renewable portfolio standard mandates, we should not be reversing our course by putting up roadblocks and imposing moratoriums on the three commercial wind projects being proposed in Connecticut.

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We need renewable energy sources in Connecticut and do not need policies that make it difficult to site wind energy facilities. We do not need a “build nothing next to residents” policy. We need a review of safety, visual impacts, proper setbacks, ice throw, sound, shadow flicker, wetland impacts, storm water run-off, interconnection plans, site design, and the impact on birds, bats and wildlife. This is what the Siting Council will be reviewing with the current permitting process in place. We do not need to come up with arbitrary setbacks that would restrict viable wind sites, such as Prospect, from ever being developed.

Prospect residents, opposed to the BNE Energy, Inc. wind turbine proposal, have come up with several concerns that should not result in a moratorium on wind turbine siting:

- “Wind Turbine Syndrome “ – A phrase coined by Dr. Nina Pierpont, author of “Wind Turbine Syndrome” – A Report on a Natural Experiment”. The book is a study of 10 families showing symptoms of irregular heartbeat, nausea, tinnitus, headaches, and sleep disturbance. Dr. Pierpont maintains that low-frequency noise generated by wind turbines is the root cause for these conditions. This conclusion is not recognized by any medical organization in the US as a legitimate diagnosis. There are no scientific studies of or research on wind turbine syndrome. Dr. Pierpont’s book was not peer-reviewed, the strongest level of scientific research.
- Reduced property values.
  - A study, conducted in December 2009, funded by the US Department of Energy, entitled “The Impact of Wind Power Projects on Residential Property Values in the United States: A Multi-Site Hedonic Analysis” concluded that neither the view of the wind facilities nor the distance of the home to those facilities is found to have any consistent, measurable, and statistically significant effect on home sale prices.  
(Download from <http://eetd.lbl.gov/EA/EMP>)
- Shadow Flicker:  
Flicker can only occur if ALL of the following occur at the same time:
  - It is daytime
  - There is no cloud or fog cover
  - There is enough wind for the turbine to be operating
  - The wind orientation is such that the wind turbine is turned to be perpendicular to the sun and the receptor (person)
  - There are no obstacles (trees) to break up the flicker
  - The sun is low in the sky (usually early morning or late afternoon).

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Flicker is less of a problem in the US than in much of Europe because we are further south and the sun is higher in the sky. Flicker does not cause epileptic seizures. Wind turbines spin too slowly.

- Ice Throw:
  - GE Wind Turbine has set back guidelines that developers should follow to ensure the safety of residents of abutting properties. These guidelines are based on practical experience (i.e. empirical) from European research done in cold climate wind turbine installations with moderate to heavy icing conditions (e.g. the Alps).

We should not ignore the concerns of the residents of Prospect. However, we should not develop policies with arbitrary setbacks without scientific justification. Those opposed to Wind Prospect want to develop regulations that will ensure no wind turbines will be developed in Connecticut.

I strongly urge you to oppose the proposed House Bill 6249.

Sincerely,

Michael Dreher