

Testimony of Michael Libertine 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 Libertine 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.

For the record and in the spirit of full disclosure, I am currently providing environmental support services to BNE Energy on their wind projects in Prospect and Colebrook, Connecticut. One of the major reasons I became involved in these projects was because of my personal belief in the merits of renewable energy and the potential for their contributing to lessening our dependence on foreign oil, domestic fossil fuels and the resultant environmental impacts.

Wind in particular can, and should, play a critical role in meeting the State of Connecticut's renewable portfolio standards. Satisfying the 2020 renewable portfolio standards' mandate of 27% electrical generation from renewable energy resources will require contributions from wind power. Considering the significant timelines associated with developing these sophisticated projects now is not the time to inhibit the process.

Should the legislature impose a moratorium on the siting wind facilities until regulations are adopted would, I believe, not only be bad policy, but could also have a devastating effect on the wind industry in Connecticut. Such action will pose additional barriers for renewable energy, while creating a negative effect on jobs, our economy and the environment.

Siting-related regulations specific to wind projects are unnecessary and, in my opinion, would be singling out just one of many types of electrical generating facilities. No such regulations exist for fossil fuel-consuming power plants or transmission/distribution facilities (e.g., substations, power lines, and the like). The Connecticut Siting Council regulates these types of projects, among others, and has the expertise and resources to review energy facilities in an unbiased, unemotional fashion to promote the best interests of the entire state, not just one neighborhood or community. I have had direct experience testifying in front of the Siting Council on more than 100 projects (including energy and telecommunications) since 2001 and I can attest that each project placed before them is given the appropriate level of scrutiny to ensure that facilities are sited in suitable locations. In my experience, the Council conducts a thorough investigation of the technical and environmental issues associated with often controversial projects, while balancing the needs of all stakeholders. To force a set of superfluous regulations on the renewable energy industry would be counterproductive and redundant, as we currently have a proven, successful process for siting electrical generating facilities.

The wind projects proposed by BNE, which have apparently prompted this potential legislation, can play an essential role in our State's renewable energy policy and provide

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direct benefits to the communities in which they would be located. The value of these projects to those towns is substantial and sustainable. They would provide sources of clean renewable energy produced at a local level, with zero air emissions and no water consumption. The environmental benefit of these projects is undeniable.

I urge you not to impose a moratorium on wind projects in Connecticut and jeopardize the state's opportunity to develop a much needed sustainable energy infrastructure at a time when it is needed most.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Libertine". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Libertine
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South Windham, CT 06266