

Testimony of Paul J. Corey on behalf of BNE Energy Inc.
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 Paul Corey and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of BNE Energy Inc. in opposition to proposed House Bill 6249 An Act Establishing a Moratorium on the Siting of Wind Projects Until the Adoption of Regulations.

BNE Energy (BNE) is wind developer based in West Hartford, CT. We currently have two commercial wind projects under development in the towns of Prospect and Colebrook, totaling 12.8 megawatts (MW) of clean renewable energy in our state. To put that in perspective, Wind Prospect will supply 25% of the annual energy usage of the Town of Prospect from just 2 wind turbines. Wind Colebrook will supply more than 400% of the annual energy usage of the Town of Colebrook from 6 wind turbines. These renewable projects represent a significant investment in the communities. Overnight BNE will become the largest taxpayers in both towns, and will become nearly 10% of the Town of Colebrook's budget. In addition, these green investments will create green jobs, foster economic development and help the state meet the mandated goals of 27% renewable energy by 2020. While these wind projects may be the first commercial wind projects in the state, they certainly will not be the last unless, however, additional regulations and a moratorium on the wind industry are adopted. Additional regulations and a moratorium on clean energy is bad public policy. It is the wrong approach for this state which has been a leader in promoting green energy. Additional regulations and a moratorium on wind would deal a crushing blow to the emerging wind industry in Connecticut and will stifle investment in wind energy for many, many years to come. In fact, if a moratorium is imposed by the Connecticut legislature, you can be assured that the wind industry in the state will be devastated and likely never recover.

However, if the legislature continues to promote renewable energy sources such as wind, solar, biomass, fuel cells and other green energies as it has done for so many years, then Connecticut will have a bright future and new clean-tech industries will emerge bringing with them renewable energy, a cleaner environment, green jobs, economic development and much needed tax revenue to the state and to local communities. Wind energy is the fastest growing sector in the energy industry and it is the leading source of renewable energy in the United States. Today, wind energy is being embraced by states and local communities throughout New England and being built near schools, churches and homes. I encourage you to look at the attachments to this testimony to see wind working in communities throughout New England. Connecticut is the only state without commercial wind, but we have an opportunity to change that. Wind energy has the capability to become the leading source of renewable energy in the state. There are many sites across the state conducive to wind generation. In fact, BNE has several other projects currently under development in the state, and many developers are waiting in the background for the right opportunity to invest in the state. They are waiting for the first commercial wind projects in the state to be approved so they can have some assurance that future investments in clean energy will not be met with additional regulations or a moratorium. One thing is certain, a moratorium on wind will kill any future investment in the wind industry in Connecticut.

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BNE has spent more than 4 years developing Wind Prospect and Wind Colebrook, more than 2 years measuring the wind resources on the sites, and more than 1 year conducting the studies and reports needed to *begin* the process before the Connecticut Siting Council (Council). We have conducted virtually every study possible for commercial wind anywhere throughout New England. In fact, we have conducted every study listed in H.B. 6249 and then some. BNE has conducted a detailed analysis of proper setbacks including considerations of tower height and distance from neighboring properties. BNE worked closely with GE Energy for many months to identify the optimal locations of the wind turbines on the sites to maximize renewable electricity production while minimizing environmental impacts, including wetland impacts and ensuring proper setbacks. We have conducted numerous studies on both sites over a period of more than a year including bird, bat and wildlife studies, sound and visual simulations, wetland impacts, storm water management plans, shadow flicker analysis, ice throw analysis, mechanical loads analysis, site design and turbine layout including proper setbacks, and interconnection studies. BNE is also proposing to install GE turbines on the sites. GE is a Connecticut based company with more than 14,000 turbines in operation worldwide that operate safely and reliably. The proposed unit is one of the world's most widely-used wind turbines in its class with operation in 19 countries, 170+ million operating hours and 100,000+ gigawatt-hours (GWh) produced. It should be noted that the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (CCEF) has been instrumental in the development of these projects. The financial assistance of CCEF providing \$1,000,000 of funding for the projects in the form of unsecured loans through its Pre-Development Program has been critically important and must be recognized.

These extensive studies are only the beginning of the process. We have met with and informed the local communities of the projects from their inception providing them with regular updates. In fact, BNE was required to obtain local approvals from both towns more than 2 years ago prior to installing a meteorological (Met) tower on the sites to measure wind resources and prove that the projects are viable. Prior to making our filing with the Council, BNE made informational filings with both towns, and we held informational meetings in the communities to properly inform the public, answer any questions, and to make them aware of the approval process. BNE filed its Petitions with the Council on November 17, 2010, for Prospect and about a month later for Colebrook. As you know, wind energy projects over 1 megawatt are regulated by the Council, which is responsible for the siting of energy and telecommunications facilities in the state. The Council is an expert agency with broad authority and with representatives from the Department of Public Utility Control, Environmental Protection Agency and other appointed officials from the Governor and from the Legislature representing the interests of the state. In addition, the Council has hired an expert consultant to assist them with the review of the wind projects and other renewable projects. The Council regulates nuclear, coal and natural gas plants, sub-stations, transmission lines and cell towers, but in a similar manner to wind the Council does not have "specific" regulations for any of these facilities. Also, most of these electric projects affect many more residences and have much greater impacts to people who live near them than wind (for example, transmission lines make noise, affect property values, are unsightly and are built near homes all over the state).

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The administrative proceeding before the Council is extensive and will take approximately six months for each project. The Council is in the process of evaluating BNE's filings for Prospect and Colebrook, and has scheduled multiple hearings in each of the towns. In addition, local officials and opponents to the projects, have intervened and will have every opportunity to fully participate in the proceedings raising issues, presenting testimony and critiquing the proposals. In addition to the extensive list of studies already filed, there will be hundreds of interrogatories, pre-filed testimony, numerous hearings, briefs, draft decisions, written exceptions, oral argument and only then, final decisions. This is exactly the type of regulatory process that is appropriate for the siting of electric energy facilities. We don't need more regulations in addition to all of these requirements and we certainly don't need a moratorium. To the contrary, we need to let the informed process work, and let the Council do their job.

The Council will be reviewing all of the issues contemplated in the Moratorium bill including, but not limited to: 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. The Council's decisions on BNE's current projects will set precedent for future wind projects in a similar manner to regulations. BNE believes that we have set the standard for all future commercial wind projects in the state by conducting all of the appropriate studies for wind energy, spending extensive time and resources to design the projects to minimize any potential impacts, and by informing the community, not only because it was the right thing to do, but also because it is required by current law and regulations.

Now is not the time to impose additional regulations specific to wind, or to impose a moratorium on the leading source of renewable energy in the United States. We need clean energy in the state, and we need it now. The Moratorium bill is bad public policy for all of these reasons:

- The proposed moratorium is in direct contradiction to the Energy Independence Act of 2005 - which promotes renewable energy and passed unanimously;
- The proposed moratorium is in direct contradiction to state-mandated RPS standards and goals; and
- The proposed moratorium is in direct contradiction with the UAPA - state law requiring the Council to render a decision on the pending petitions within 180 days.

The moratorium should and must be rejected. Contrary to the assertions of some opponents attempting to kill wind in Connecticut, wind turbines are extremely safe, reliable and have minimal impacts. Wind turbines are not evil, they are not giant monsters invading our homes and ruining our way of life. Rather, wind turbines are a clean source of renewable energy that produces a significant amount of electricity from the wind. Wind energy is good for the environment, creates jobs, stimulates the local economy, and produces a significant amount of tax revenue. Wind turbines are extremely safe, reliable and have minimal impacts. This is evidenced by the fact that wind is the fastest growing sector in the energy industry and that wind

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turbine are being built in communities across America and throughout New England near schools, churches, businesses, homes and cities. People who oppose wind projects understand this too. So what do you do when you don't have the facts on your side, you propose additional regulations and a moratorium to kill wind projects in the state.

BNE understands the legitimate concerns of local residents and we believe that we have appropriately addressed them. One of the most important issues in developing an energy project, including wind, is finding the right site. BNE spent more than a year identifying proper sites for our projects and we believe that Wind Prospect and Wind Colebrook are excellent locations for the first commercial wind farms in Connecticut.

The opposition claims that they support wind energy, that they believe in renewable energy in the state, but that wind turbines don't belong in residential neighborhoods. While this thinly veiled argument may have some appeal, BNE's projects are appropriately sited. For example, the location of the two wind turbines proposed by BNE in Prospect will be in the middle of 68 acres, adjacent to more than 1,000 acres of water company land that will never be developed. While there are a few homes near the project, BNE has provided for appropriate setbacks from residential properties to ensure safe and reliable operations. It is also important that the turbine locations are close to the grid to minimize interconnection costs which can be substantial, and to also minimize environmental impacts in connecting to the grid. In addition, the site is located in a mixed use area of residential, commercial and industrial businesses located on Route 69 which is the main road in Prospect. Next to the homes near the site is a used car dealership, a commercial office building, 3 cell towers and the U.S. Cap and Jacket brownfield consisting of a 5.1-acre parcel of industrially-zoned land that is contaminated. We believe the wind turbines will truly enhance the neighborhood while at the same time making Prospect greener. Similarly, Wind Colebrook is located on over 200 acres of uninhabited land next to conservation property and a gun club in a mixed use area along busy Route 44. BNE has not ignored the concerns of local residents, we have addressed them and so too will the Council during its review process.

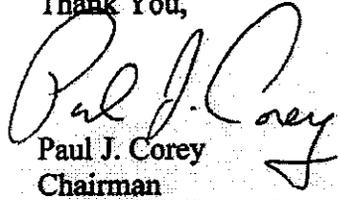
The Connecticut legislature has been a leader in the country in promoting renewable energy. It has encouraged the development of renewable projects and has set high standards and mandates that 20% of our electricity supply come from Class I sources like wind and solar by 2020. BNE Energy completely supports the renewable portfolio standards established by the state, but also believes that we need renewable energy projects built in Connecticut producing green energy, creating jobs, and contributing to the tax base of the local communities.

The state has an opportunity to embrace wind energy. Now is not the time for more regulations or a moratorium that will crush the emerging wind industry in the state by imposing delays and making it impossible to bring federal incentives to Connecticut. While the federal government and states throughout New England are encouraging and promoting clean energy, Connecticut should not reverse course from its wise policies implanted for more than a decade promoting renewable energy. All forms of clean energy, including wind energy, should be promoted. We need clean renewable energy now, and we need it for the future of generations to come.

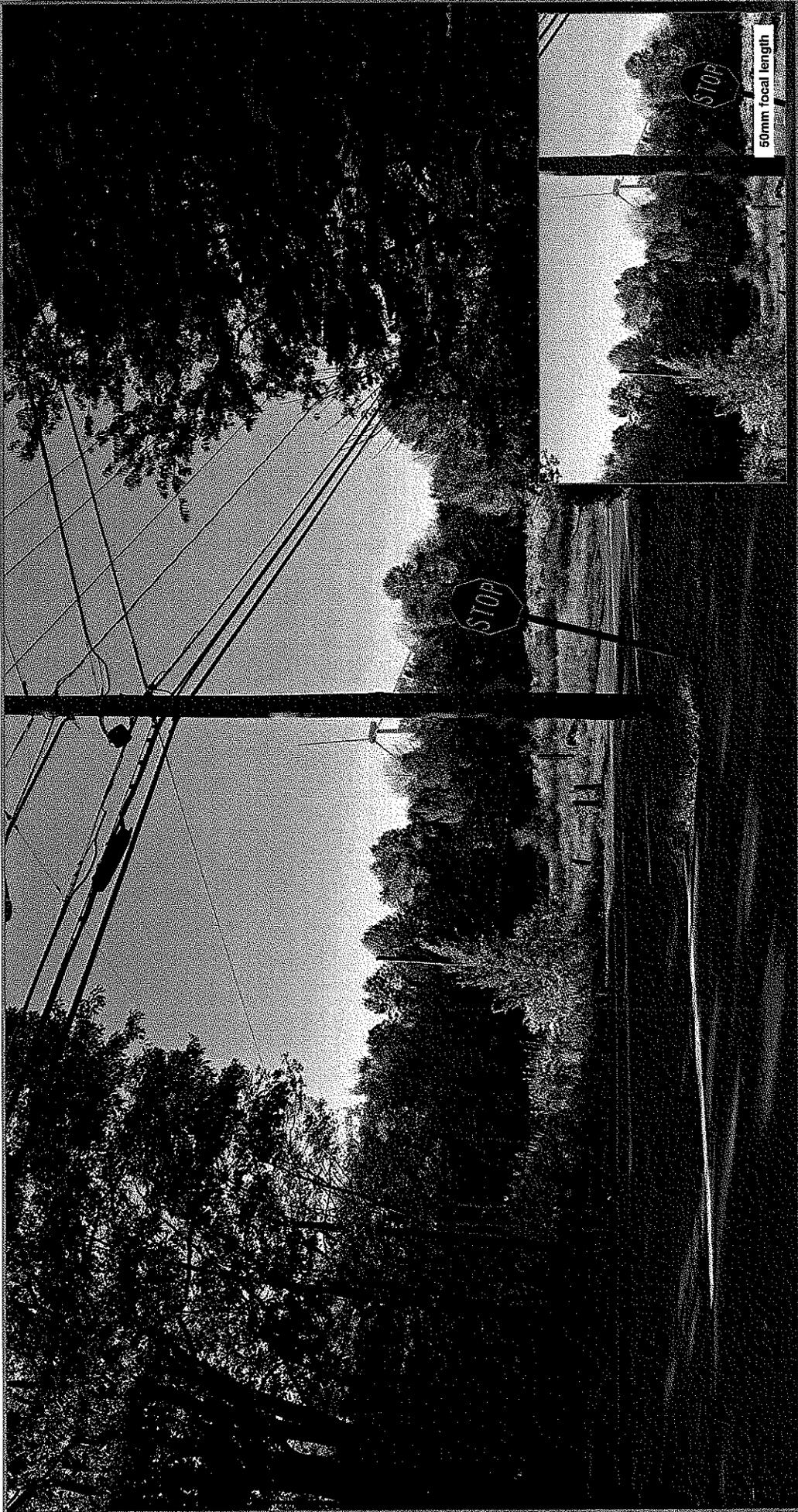
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BNE Energy strongly urges the rejection of H.B. 6249.

Thank You,

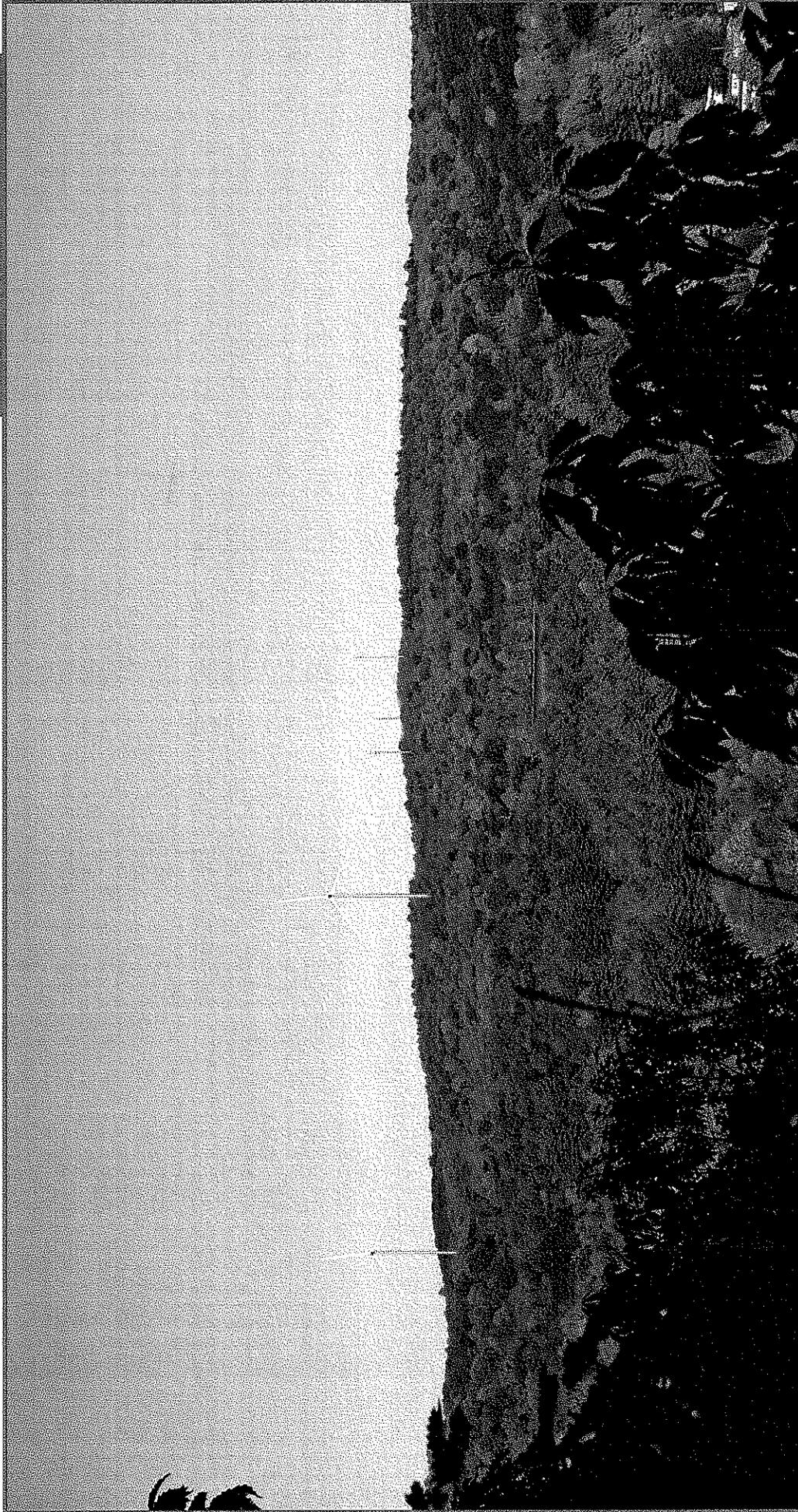

Paul J. Corey
Chairman

PHOTOGRAPHIC SIMULATION



VIEW	DESCRIPTION	CITY/TOWN	ORIENTATION	DISTANCE TO SITE AREA	VISIBILITY
1	GEORGE STREET AT ROUTE 69 (18mm focal length)	PROSPECT	NORTHWEST	0.25 MILE +/-	YEAR-ROUND

PHOTOGRAPHIC SIMULATION



VIEW	DESCRIPTION	CITY/TOWN	ORIENTATION	DISTANCE TO SITE AREA	VISIBILITY
2	NAUGATUCK STATE FOREST VISTA AREA (50mm focal length)	NAUGATUCK	NORTHEAST	1.80 MILES +/-	YEAR-ROUND

PHOTOGRAPHIC SIMULATION



VIEW	DESCRIPTION	CITY/TOWN	ORIENTATION	DISTANCE TO SITE AREA
1	U.S. ROUTE 44 ADJACENT TO THE NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT SPORTSMEN'S ASSOCIATION PROPERTY (24mm focal length)	COLEBROOK	SOUTH	0.69 MILE +/-