

# Stamford Wind Proposal Tests Whether Large Turbines Have a Future in Vermont

November 22, 2023 | Seven Days (Burlington, VT) Author: Kevin McCallum | Section: Environment | 1564 Words OpenURL Link

Martha Staskus first visited a clearing half a mile up a dirt road in Stamford to assess whether the remote southern Vermont property would be suitable for a solar array. Looking south across the forested valley, Staskus, the chief development officer for Norwich Solar, sensed another opportunity.

She surveyed with pride the 19 turbines of the Hoosac Wind Power Project just over the state line in Massachusetts. While working for a different company, Staskus helped develop Hoosac, as well as 26 Vermont turbines nearby, in Deerfield and Searsburg.

So she knew that strong, steady winds buffet the mountainous area. She told her boss, Norwich Solar CEO Jim Merriam, "Man, it would be nice to do a wind project there," she recalled.

Nearly two years later, Staskus is preparing to ask regulators to allow the construction of a 2.2megawatt wind turbine on a knoll just north of that forest clearing. The 500foottall turbine, which would provide enough power for about 925 homes, would be the tallest structure of any kind in Vermont.

There hasn't been a new utilityscale wind project permitted or built in Vermont since Deerfield's 15 turbines began spinning in 2017. Several subsequent proposals have stalled, which wind advocates blame on a hostile political and regulatory climate.

In 2020, David Blittersdorf, the chief executive officer of AllEarth Renewables, declared wind energy development all but dead in Vermont when he couldn't secure a permit for a 2.2megawatt turbine on a farm in the Northeast Kingdom.

"We are in real trouble as a state if we can't build a single wind turbine in a flat cornfield, hosted by a dairy farmer that wants the project built to help keep the farm going," Blittersdorf said at the time.

The Stamford project represents a new test of Blittersdorf's windisdead prediction.

Staskus argues that the powerful turbine would reduce the burning of fossil fuels for electricity, generate needed tax revenue for the town and have limited impact on neighbors.

"Wind energy in the southwest part of Vermont has been demonstrated to be an important resource contributing to the state's renewable energy goals," she said. "Here is an opportunity for Stamford to continue to be part of that movement benefiting all Vermonters."

The company has already secured a longterm contract for the electricity under the state's Standard Offer Program, which creates incentives for renewable energy projects by requiring Vermont utilities to purchase the power at a specific, desirable rate. Staskus declined to say what the Stamford project would cost but said it would be limited to a single turbine. Though it would not enjoy the same economies of scale as multiturbine installations, "At this point, it pencils," she said.

She is now preparing to seek formal approval from the state Public Utility Commission. Her application, due by December 15, will kick off a public process expected to stretch well into next year.

Norwich Solar shared preliminary details of the project over the summer with town officials and neighbors — quickly prompting a litany of objections that echo those raised about past wind proposals.

Neighbors wonder whether their sleep would be disrupted, their views marred and their property values deflated. Town officials decry the turbine as too close to homes and out of step with the town plan. Others worry about harm to the fragile hillside ecosystem and wildlife habitat from the steep, 1.5mile access road that would need to be built to reach the knoll. Activist Annette Smith, executive director of Vermonters for a Clean Environment, is counseling residents on the most effective ways to make their objections known.

"These turbines are too big," Smith said of contemporary wind development. "The amount of environmental damage and community division and aftereffects they create are all massive for what the benefits are."

The fervid opposition to a single, remote turbine underscores the headwinds that wind energy development faces despite the state's commitment to sharply reducing emissions from fossil fuels.

Wind power advocates say the industry has been stalled by political opposition — Gov. Phil Scott is not a fan of ridgeline wind — and by unnecessarily strict permitting rules, including some of the nation's toughest limits on turbine noise.

"Wind is in a coma in Vermont," said Nicholas Laskovski, senior manager of wind energy operations for Greenbacker Renewable Energy, a New Yorkbased investment company. Greenbacker owns Georgia Mountain Community Wind's four turbines on a ridge northeast of Milton.

Sound rules imposed on new wind projects in 2017 have suppressed wind development, he said. The rules require that turbine noise measured 100 feet from a home must not exceed 42 decibels during the day and 39 at night. Forty decibels is about the sound level of a quiet library or the hum of a refrigerator.

Those rules would need to be relaxed if wind is to be harnessed on the scale needed to limit climate change, according to Peter Sterling, executive director of Renewable Energy Vermont.

"With a wind sound rule that is quieter than a library, we are not able to build wind in Vermont in a way that would meaningfully help us meet the load demand," he said.

Wind power complements solar by operating well in winter, when days are shorter, and at night, Sterling said. Demand for cheap, clean electricity is only going to increase as more people switch to driving electric cars and heating their homes and businesses with electric heat pumps.

But how turbines look, as much as how they sound, will continue to drive opposition to their installation. Until that changes, the industry will likely be relegated to remote corners of the state, Laskovski said.

"I think Vermonters in general have a very protective spirit of their ridgelines and mountains," he said.

Staskus is betting that her project would not be visually jarring to residents of Stamford, in part because there are lots of turbines there already.

A visual simulation the company prepared from Route 8, three miles south of the turbine site, shows the slender white blades barely peeking over a distant stand of trees. Additional simulations will likely be required for the Public Utility Commission process.

The fact that Stamford is surrounded by wind turbines is cold comfort to some residents who worry their town is already shouldering more than its share of the renewable energy burden.

"You look to the left — windmills. You look to the right — windmills. It's just crazy," said Lisa Gramlin, who lives a little more than a kilometer from the turbine site. "No matter which way we turn, we're already surrounded."

Most frustrating for Gramlin, a writer who lives in the Alpenwald Village subdivision closest to the project, is that the

town and Bennington County have planning documents that attempt to bar large turbines from within one kilometer of homes. About nine homes in Alpenwald Village are within that onekilometer buffer zone, and the developer's decision to push forward with a plan anyway has left many in town feeling steamrolled, Gramlin said.

"Now the town feels like, Wow, we spent two years writing this plan, and now you're not going to even respect it?" she said.

In a letter to the PUC, the Stamford Selectboard objected to the turbine and noted that it had received more than 100 messages of opposition and none of support.

Bill Colvin, the executive director of the Bennington County Regional Commission, said he met with the developers in the spring and "flagged as potentially problematic" the town's onekilometer rule.

Because Stamford adopted what is referred to as an "enhanced energy plan" in its town plan in 2019, the PUC is required to give "substantial deference" to the town's input, he explained.

Staskus acknowledged that the town plan's residential buffer represents a "potential constraint" but denied that the zone was an absolute prohibition on turbines in those areas. She cited a line from a 2017 version of the plan that says "the need for a drastic shift in current energy trends is undeniable."

Bennington's regional plan calls for 18 to 34 megawatts of new wind power capacity to be built in the county by 2050 to help the state reach its energy goals. Wind maps suggest that Stamford, with its windy peaks and proximity to transmission lines, could carry much of that load. "Not every town has these high ridges that make sense for wind generation," Colvin said.

T.J. Poor, the director of the Department of Public Service's Regulated Utility Planning Division, agrees that wind will need to be part of the state's transition to renewables. But Vermont can avoid erecting lots of new wind turbines on its ridgelines, he said.

"Those goals can be met other ways," Poor said, such as importing windgenerated electricity from elsewhere in the region, including from offshore turbines in the Atlantic Ocean.

Advocates say that may be a pipe dream. A number of those offshore projects are stalled or have been abandoned as interest rates and construction costs soar.

Those setbacks reinforce Blittersdorf's conviction that Vermonters need to look not to Québec or Cape Cod for their renewable energy needs, but right at home.

"We're slowwalking our way off an energy cliff," he said. "And we're going to be destitute if we don't produce our own energy."

Meanwhile, Staskus is hopeful her Stamford proposal will demonstrate that wind development is still possible in Vermont.

Sound and other studies are under way and will be submitted with the PUC application. She hopes the community and regulators can then have an informed discussion about the impacts of the turbine, including the benefits.

"I hope that this is a step in shifting the conversation for more wind in the state," she said.

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# GMC seeks wind project viewshed assessment

October 19, 2023 | Bennington Banner (VT) Section: Main | 1061 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

BY JIM T HERRIEN Vermont News & Media correspondent

STAMFORD - The Green Mountain Club is requesting a study of visual impacts a proposed 500-foot wind generating turbine on a site in Stamford would have from the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail corridor.

In a letter sent to the state Public Utility Commission about the proposed 2.2-megawatt facility planned by Norwich Solar Technologies, the club, which maintains the Long Trail, requested "a viewshed assessment of the proposed turbine from the trail treadway ... so that the visual impact of this proposal can be assessed for these significant recreation resources."

Reached by phone on Tuesday, Martha Staskus, chief development officer with the company, said the developer already has done assessment work on views from surrounding areas, and information on that work and a map are posted on the Stamford Wind project webpage on the company's website.

"I'm appreciative of Green Mountain Club's comments, and certainly we have included consideration

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### TRAILS MAINTAINED

of the trail in our assessments," Staskus said.

Both the 14-state Appalachian Trail and Vermont's Long Trail share a pathway through South-ern Vermont before branching off in the Rutland area.

According to the club's comment letter, the wind project - if approved - would be within a 5-mile radius of the trails in both Stamford and Woodford.

Executive Director Michael DeBonis said that the nonprofit club has more than 9,500 members and manages more than 500 miles of hiking trails in Vermont, also including trails in the Kingdom Heritage Lands in the Northeast Kingdom area.

### APPLICATION PENDING

While the wind project developer has filed a required 45-day advance notice of a formal permit application to the PUC, that period has expired. However, the company has since asked for two extensions to a deadline, which was linked to the firm's 2022 agreement to sell electricity to utilities at a specific price over 20 years.

Staskus said the extension at this point was requested - and apparently is being allowed by the commission - because Norwich is waiting for necessary assessment reports from the utilities involved, which are Green Mountain Power and National Grid in Massachusetts, on connectivity requirements and related issues.

"The situation we are in is, we cannot submit an application - the application will not be deemed complete - until we have the resulting studies from the utilities," she said.

No hearings in the permitting case will be scheduled until the developer has submitted a detailed application with information on several aspects of the project and its potential impacts on the surrounding area and the environment.

#### **COMMENTS**

Comments also were sent to the PUC by abutters and others and by the Stamford Planning Commission, which is requesting intervenor status in the coming permitting process.

In a submission, Planning Commission Chairman Aaron Malachuk stated in part that:

- The location of the wind project does not meet Stamford's Enhanced Energy Plan, which calls for a one kilometer residential buffer zone.
- The location of the wind turbine is not within a preferred area for wind energy projects as established in the town energy plan.
- The commission has received comments "from at least nine residents up-gradient who do not want this windmill so close to their homes and are concerned about the visual impact of the windmill and a negative effect on property values. The Planning Commission has not received written or verbal comments from any resident who is in favor of this project."

Additional comments were submitted by a group of abutters to the project site in the town's northeast corner, several miles from the Readsboro border and west of Route 8.

They stated in part, "The proposed wind project: does not meet either the Bennington Regional [Planning Commission] or the Stamford Enhanced Energy Plans, which are entitled to 'substantial deference' from the Public Utility Commission. Therefore, we recommend that Norwich Solar Technologies withdraw this proposal, as it has the potential to be disruptive to our community while not providing sufficient benefit to the state of Vermont to overcome the substantial deference the PUC must give to the town and regional plans."

# PROJECT DETAILS

As described on the developer's website, "The project location utilizes portions of two private land parcels for access and hosting the 2.2 megawatt wind turbine. The wind turbine will be accessed by utilizing an existing drive off Main Road in Stamford and extending it for a total length of [approximately] 1.46 mile."

The description adds, "A Green Mountain Power (GMP) electric line extension will run along the access drive. The wind turbine location is at approximately 2,250 feet elevation. A previously disturbed location along the access road will be used for temporary construction staging and a crane pad will be constructed at the turbine location to facilitate installation of the wind turbine."

The main components of the wind turbine, according to the website, would include "a three-bladed rotor assembly, a nacelle, and the supporting tower. The rotor assembly - the three blades attached to the hub - is mounted to the nacelle, which sits atop the tower. The wind turbine will be approximately 500 feet tall when the tip of a blade is in its highest position."

## 'POWERHOUSE'

During a Planning Commission meeting in August, Staskus said benefits of the project would include the production

of non-fossil fuel generated energy and would bring Stamford about \$30,000 in annual property tax revenue.

Concerning sound levels, Staskus said state rules require the sound to be below 39 decibels at night, which she said is approximately the sound rating for a refrigerator or dishwasher.

Staskus said the facility is proposed in the same general area as Deerfield Wind and Searsburg Wind in Vermont and the Hoosac Wind facility in Monroe and Florida, Mass. - in a region considered favorable to wind power generation.

She termed the region "an energy powerhouse" in explaining why so many projects have been proposed or located there.

Staskus added that the PUC permitting process would consider visual impacts, wildlife habitat, noise impacts, historic preservation effects; stormwater runoff plans; wetlands impacts, access road details and other project aspects.

State environmental or other agencies also will likely review and comment on the project details.

Jim Therrien can be reached at therrienjim76@gmail.com or by phone at 413-281-2646.

A dot on a map included with information on Norwich Technologies' proposed 500-foot wind power facility in Stamford shows where the tower would be located. IMAGE PROVIDED

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# Public can have say on wind project - Hearing tonight on proposed 500-foot wind turbine

August 21, 2023 | Bennington Banner (VT)

Section: Main | 1027 Words Page: A01

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OpenURL Link

BY JIM T HERRIEN Vermont News & Media correspondent

STAMFORD - Both opponents and the developer of a 2.2-megawatt wind power project are urging residents to attend a formal hearing on the project Monday at 6 p.m. before the town Planning Commission.

The commission and about a dozen residents met Friday afternoon with Martha Staskus, chief development officer with Norwich Technologies, which proposes a single 500-foot wind turbine near the town's northeast corner, several miles from the Readsboro border and west of Route 8 (see map).

#### **TECHNICAL DETAILS**

Staskus responded to numerous questions from commissioners and residents- none of whom voiced support for the project - during the two-hour meeting. She also urged residents to attend the Aug. 21 hearing in the Community Room at the Stamford Elementary School, when technical staff and consultants representing the company will be in attendance.

Among considerations in planning and siting such a facility, Staskus said, are visual impacts, wildlife habitat, noise impacts, historic preservation effects; stormwater runoff plans; wetlands impacts, access road details and other project aspects that state environmental or other agencies will likely review and comment on during the permitting process.

'CAN WE VOTE?'

Residents, in turn, promised an effort to alert townspeople about the

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hearing, during which comments can become part of the official record the permit- granting authority - the state Public Utility Commission- will consider in its decision.

One question, phrased several different ways at the meeting Friday, was what can the town do if residents are opposed to the project? And "do we have any vote" on the project?

A townwide vote would be considered along with the other information received by the PUC, but such a vote would be advisory.

Permitting authority on energy projects in Vermont rests with the three-member PUC, but under the permitting legislation, deference is to be given to representatives of the community.

"Substantial deference" is allowed for a town that has adopted an energy amendment in its town plan, which Stamford has done.

One aspect of the town energy plan, Chairman Aaron Malachuk said, is that it calls for a one-kilometer setback from residences, which commissioners said the wind project plan would not meet.

### PRE-APPLICATION

The project is still in the pre-application stage, when the developer is expected to consider feedback from residents in preparing its formal application for a required certificate of public good permit.

The developer has asked the PUC to extend a Sept. 1 deadline to submit a complete application to Oct. 15, in part because of slow mail delivery issues that delayed project notification letters sent last month.

The PUC has yet to decide on the extension request, Staskus said, but indicated the developer would be able to meet a Sept. 1 filing deadline if required.

Another formal comment period will commence once the formal application is filed with the PUC, and Staskus noted that town boards or officials and residents can request formal intervenor status and become a party to the process.

Information is available on the PUC website and the commission's document management site.

'IT'S WINDY' Asked why the developer chose the Stamford site, which is near other commercial wind turbines, while towns in the Bennington area have no similar projects, Staskus said the simple answer is, "It's windy."

She added that the proposed site has an existing access road, which would be upgraded, is close to power lines to connect to the grid, and it is at a good elevation for wind power - about 2,250 feet.

Commission member David Saldo said it seems to him that towns like Stamford "are being taken advantage of because we are small."

"This is an energy powerhouse," Staskus said at one point, referring not only to wind but hydroelectric facilities in the region.

She said that is the reason wind power developers have focused on the Searsburg, Readsboro, Stamford area and on nearby mountain sites in Massachusetts.

The project is proposed for the same general area as Deerfield Wind and Sears-burg Wind in Vermont and the Hoosac Wind wind facility in Monroe and Florida, Mass. There are about 35 wind turbines in that mountainous area, the first project opening in Searsburg in the late 1990s.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Staskus said wind study efforts at the proposed site began last year and are continuing. She added that revealing specific aspects of the project has depended on the data being collected.

According to a description on the developer's website, "The project location utilizes portions of two private land parcels for access and hosting the 2.2-megawatt wind turbine. The wind turbine will be accessed by utilizing an existing drive off Main Road in Stamford and extending it for a total length of [approximately] 1.46 mile."

The wind turbine would be approximately 500 feet tall when the tip of a blade is in its highest position.

#### **OBJECTIONS**

Residents raised several objections to the project, including what they believe will be a negative impact on property values in the area, noise from the turbines and visual impacts of the 500foot turbine.

One resident, noting the turbines in nearby towns, said, "In this area, we are pretty aware of how the price of these homes are go down" if the project is approved.

Residents also noted that the turbine would be near the Alpenwald Village development, which began during the era of the former Dutch Hill Ski Area. The development, which straddles the Stamford-Readsboro border, still has hundreds of possible building lots, residents said, and has seen renewed buyer interest during the pandemic.

On the plus side, Staskus said, the project would bring Stamford about \$30,000 in annual property tax revenue.

Concerning sound levels, Staskus said state rules require the sound to be below 39 decibels at night, which she said is approximately the sound rating for a refrigerator or dishwasher.

Town Clerk Lori Shepard asked whether a petition drive would be one way to express public opinion.

While it wouldn't necessarily sway the PUC in its decision, "It certainly is a way to bring people together" and have a voice on the project, Saldo said.

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# Stamford Wind project getting buzz

August 17, 2023 | Bennington Banner (VT)

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Page: A01 OpenURL Link

BY JIM T HERRIEN Banner correspondent

STAMFORD -ThePlanningCommission has scheduled a meeting and a public hearing to focus on a 2.2-megawatt capacity single turbine wind facility proposed in the town.

Town Clerk Lori Shepard said the commission has scheduled a meeting for Friday at 3 p.m. at the town offices to gather information about the proposed project, and they have scheduled a public hearing for Monday, Aug. 21, at 6 p.m. in the Community Room at the Stamford Elementary School.

Norwich Technologies, developer of what is called the Stamford Wind Turbine Project, is expected to send a representative to the meetings.

The developer has posted a required 45-day advance notice of intent to submit a permit application to the Public Utility Commission.

The project is proposed for the same general area as Deer-field Wind and Searsburg Wind in Vermont and the Hoosac Wind in Monroe and Florida, Mass. The area is considered favorable to wind power generation.

As described on the developer's website, "The project location utilizes portions of two private land parcels for access and hosting the 2.2 megawatt wind turbine. The wind turbine will be accessed by utilizing an existing drive off Main Road in Stamford and extending it for a total length of [approximately] 1.46 mile."

The description continues: "A Green Mountain Power (GMP) electric line extension will run along the access drive. The wind turbine location is at approximately 2,250 feet elevation. A previously disturbed location along the access road will be used for temporary construction staging and a crane pad will be constructed at the turbine location to facilitate installation of the wind turbine. Approximately 20 acres of the 250-acre parcels will be used for the project.

"The wind turbine will be a neutral off-white color which softens its appearance on the horizon," according to the company's website. "The tower will be enclosed to provide protection from the elements for electrical and communication cables, operational computer equipment, and safe access for service personnel."

The main components of the wind turbine include "a three-bladed rotor assembly,

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a nacelle, and the supporting tower. The rotor assembly - the three blades attached to the hub - is mounted to the nacelle, which sits atop the tower. The wind turbine will be approximately 500 feet tall when the tip of a blade is in its highest position."

PRIOR MEETINGS

Both the commission and the Select Board have discussed the project plan at prior meetings.

According to minutes of an Aug. 3 Select Board meeting, the requirements of the Enhanced Energy chapter of Stamford's town plan include a required buffer zone between wind turbines and residences and also describes a preferred location in town for renewable energy.

Whether the proposed project would comply with either aspect of the town plan was questioned.

Similar issues were discussed during an Aug. 7 Planning Commission meeting, according to the meeting minutes.

A representative of Norwich Technologies could not be reached Wednesday for comment.

Jim Therrien can be reached at therrienjim76@gmail.com or by phone at 413-281-2646.

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# Firm mulls wind project

August 13, 2022 | Bennington Banner (VT) Section: Main | 508 Words Page: A01

OpenURL Link

**STAMFORD** 

BY JIM T HERRIEN Bennington Banner

STAMFORD - An alternative energy developer is considering a 2.2 megawatt wind turbine project in Stamford.

Norwich Solar Technologies would construct the facility if the firm's yet-to-be submitted permit application to the Public Utility Commission wins approval.

The project is proposed for the same general area as Deerfield Wind and Sears-burg Wind in Vermont and the Hoosac Wind wind facility in Monroe and Florida, Mass. - in a region considered favorable to wind power generation.

#### STANDARD OFFER BID

What the developer has done to date is receive Public Utility Commission approval for its bid under the state's Standard Offer Program to sell power to utilities for a set price over 20 years.

The proposal was the only large wind project on a list of wind, solar, biomass

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and hydropower proposals approved in the latest round of bidding by developers.

Reached Friday, Martha Staskus, chief development officer with Norwich Solar Technologies, said submission of the first notice to the Public Utility Commission of a pending permit application is not on the immediate horizon.

"We are in the very, very early stages of this," she said.

### **PRELIMINARY**

The company, she said, is still working out many details, like the cost and method of how best to link the project to the grid and other aspects of the extensive requirements for siting a wind, solar or other facility.

"We have to do our work," she said. "There is outreach and information and data gathering and interconnection assessments, etc., before we can contemplate the process of advance notice of a project to the Public Utility Commission, notifying adjoining neighbors ... ."

Thecompany alsoneeds to confirm the wind resource, she added. Obviously, with the Hoosac Wind project and the Deerfield project and the Searsburg project - all of those are pretty strong indications that it's windy in this area, but we need to collect wind resource data to be sure that's the case.

The proposal also will remain preliminary, she said, until more is known about how electricity generated from the project would enter the power grid.

"There is no sense in talking about it until I know the distribution system will be able accept generation in that area," Staskus said.

Stamford is in the Bennington County Regional Commission area. James Sullivan, executive director of the Bennington County Regional Commission, said this week he was aware of a proposed wind project in the town but hasn't heard details.

"I've heard only that there is a proposed project in Stamford," Sullivan said. "In the most recent update to the Stamford Town Plan, they did identify an area that would be preferred for wind energy development- in the high elevation land in the northwest part of town that is distant from most residential development."

Jim Therrien writes for Vermont News and Media, including the Bennington Banner, Manchester Journal and Brattleboro Reformer. Email jtherrien@benningtonbanner.com

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# I support state Rep. Farley-Bouvier for reelection

May 11, 2022 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Section: Opinion | 1110 Words

Page: A08
OpenURL Link

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor: I am a retired teacher and school counselor in the Pittsfield Public Schools, and I support Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier for reelection as Pittsfield's state representative.

Tricia is our education champion. She played a key role in passing the 2019 Student Opportunity Act, which has resulted in an extraordinary annual increase for the Pittsfield Public Schools over its implementation. The SOA aims for every student in the state to experience high-quality learning opportunities that lead to success in school and postsecondary success. It strives to close the gaps in outcomes across racial and ethnic groups, economically disadvantaged communities, students with disabilities, and English learners compared to students whose first language is English. With such a substantial increase in funding, we have the opportunity to transform our schools.

It has already begun, with early education classes and family engagement coordinators in every elementary school. Our teachers are also seeing substantial and well-deserved 15 percent raises in this next three-year contract. Let's encourage teachers to remain in the system in order to continue applying and improving their educational skills for our youth. This greatly helps the superintendent of Pittsfield schools, Mr. Joseph Curtis.

A longtime advocate for high quality education, Rep. Farley-Bouvier has helped to secure a \$110 million increased investment in early education in the fiscal 2023 House budget, with \$70 million reserved for increases in early education salaries. She believes that high-quality, accessible early education is the secret sauce to overcome poverty.

Rep. Farley-Bouvier is a team worker. She collaborates with parents, guardians and Berkshire County officials to advance the Student Opportunity Act. These include the state Legislature, Reps. John Barrett, "Smitty" Pignatelli and Paul Mark and state Sen. Adam Hinds. Farley-Bouvier is a beacon of light who listens carefully and patiently to all. She understands that government is the eyes, ears and voice of the people. I am grateful for her energy, engagement and eye toward education for our youth. Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier acts to make legislation work for our community.

Let's continue to support Tricia Farley-Bouvier for state representative.

Marietta Rapetti Cawse, Pittsfield

Plagued by Hoosac Wind noise in Clarksburg

To the editor: Trouble sleeping yet again - noise from the Hoosac Wind Power Project. In the morning, I tried calling the complaint line to no avail.

In the past, Hoosac Wind owner Iberdrola Renew-ables would tell me what the conditions were at that time, but the last two times there was no call back. Eventually, I was offered a "noise machine" with recordings of sounds, which only added more sound and no help.

Next offer was improvements - windows and insulation - which required signing a "good neighbor policy" that prevents public discourse about Hoosac Wind. The agreement would come before any improvements. I'm not willing to sign anything and end of that.

Ten years of the same problems because of noise from Hoosac Wind. I was healthy before and hardly ever became sick, and since 2015 I have been diagnosed three times with lymphoma. Disease hasn't been easy with lack of sleep.

I wake every morning in a state of anxiety, and now the only time I don't feel anxious is leaving home for extended times. I was diagnosed with acute anxiety disorder and taking medicine as a result. Not only anxiety; I'm tired. The anxiety feels like ants crawling inside me, and a few times became acute enough that I sought treatment at ER.

It's a nightmare I don't wake up from, and I feel desperate. This is our home, and we choose to live here for the quiet lifestyle. I spoke with the Clarksburg town manager 2013 about noise. He asked who is the noisy neighbor, and I told him Hoosac Wind. He scoffed, rolled his eyes and said he couldn't help, as it's not in Clarksburg. Noisy neighbors at a night party would bring police and an order to quiet down or else.

Noise and vibrations are real from these projects, and infrasound isn't audible but does cause problems. Government agencies refuse to do sound monitoring for infrasound and only tests for dBA. Although many of my neighbors have given up complaining, we still are plagued by Hoosac Wind.

Larry Lorusso, Clarksburg

Monterey deserves accurate reporting

To the editor: I have admired reporter Heather Bellows' writing and have watched The Berkshire Eagle getting better and better, but, and there is a strong but, Ms. Bellows reporting and The Eagle's editorial on happenings in Monterey fails its readers and my town.

Much of the information Ms. Bellows has relied on seems to have come from one Select Board member who rarely shows up for board meetings and has sued the town (luckily, unsuccessfully). ("What happens when one town employee has too much power? It doesn't go well, probe into Monterey's long civic conflict finds," Eagle, May 1.)

In the editorial, The Eagle touts the impartiality of the investigation, on which we the taxpayers paid much more than had been suggested. ("Our Opinion: Monterey paid for an investigative report; officials shouldn't just sweep it under the rug," Eagle, May 7.) Add to this that the investigation failed to interview several of the people highlighted in the report.

Karen Shreefter, Monterey

Bird scooters seem like a legal and logistical nightmare

To the editor: Some of my family intimated that this letter to the editor is a "cranky old lady letter." Me? Imagine.

I was sputtering about the "Birds" last evening - the new scooters which have recently arrived in Pittsfield - regaling my family with the fact that some Birds flew around and in front of me the other day, like so many wasps. ("The Birds have landed. Here's what you need to know about Pittsfield's new e-scooters," Eagle, May 4.)

They're fast, they were definitely not being ridden by commuters and here's the cranky old lady part: not a helmet in sight.

So when they hit me, do I sue them or the city? Or if I hit them, do they sue me or the city or that Bird company? The suing will be so complicated. It's only a matter of time.

Amy Renak, Pittsfield

Misleading headline on Estrella story

To the editor: We live in a fractious time where many people distrust institutions, including the press.

A recent Eagle headline is an example of from where that distrusts stems. Monday's paper had the front-page headline: "2 years before deadly police encounter, Estrella was arrested on firearms charges." What the article actually says is that police believe that Mr. Estrella was threatened into taking the rap for the gun, most likely owned by a Mr. Moody.

Someone glancing at this front page headline could come away thinking that Mr. Estrella was a thug who got what was coming to him. The content of the article tells a very different story.

Our free press is a fragile institution. Please do better next time.

### Andrea Sholler, Stockbridge

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# First hand reflections on polio epidemic Drop MCAS, focus on learning

May 5, 2020 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Section: Opinion | 1286 Words

Page: A06 OpenURL Link

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

First hand reflections on polio epidemic

To the editor: I read the article about polio in the Saturday Eagle with interest as I worked through that epidemic at Sampson Pavilion at the House of Mercy Hospital here in Pittsfield. ("Baby Boomer Memories: Some facts about polio in the US") One of our nurses developed bulbar polio requiring use of the "iron lung" otherwise known as a respirator. The hospital had one in the subbasement that had never been used. The workmen brought it to Sampson where we dusted it and cleaned it but none of us had used one before so we had to wait for someone to come from the polio foundation to show us how to care for a patient confined to the respirator. It was a daunting task but we dealt with many patients needing that type of care.

The Sampson Pavilion had a porch running around the building and windows to every room opened out to it. Families were not allowed in the building but could talk to their relative on the porch outside of their room.

We had many patients requiring this type of facility including hot packs and physical therapy all of which helped in their recovery.

I remember those days well and am relieved that polio-myeletis is a disease of the past.

Norma M. Purdy, Pittsfield

Drop MCAS, focus on learning

To the editor: How can Pittsfield/Berkshire County find creativity from the COVID-19 chaos?

Jenn Smith's column of April 14 said it so well: Virus suspension of MCAS should be permanent. Eliminate the MCAS, PARCC or the MCAS 2.0. Shift millions of dollars from number 2 pencils, testing preparation materials, Scantron sheet readers, computer software and systems upgrades.

Many of us learn through testing from the school of hard knocks rather than MCAS or other comprehensive testing.

From my perspective eliminating the MCAS for 2019-20 is a beginning.

Let educators spend time leading youth to learn how to listen, how to ask questions, how to participate in dialog, how to learn with a purpose, each according to his or her ability.

Let us remember that the attitudes we teach prepare youth for a lifetime. It is important to encourage positive relationships, accountability, courage.

Although we may be vulnerable, our vulnerability teaches us how resilient we are. Let us teach one another by example to learn by doing responsibly.

Teaching how to improve takes time. Giving students time encourages a respect for progress and problem solving rather than perfection. Let's try teaching without expensive testing. Let us stress the pleasure of becoming an

educated person to our youth.

Let us discover what an enormous interest learning adds to life.

Use money carefully to keep our educators! Drop MCAS! Lead our students K-12 to a love of learning!

Marietta Rapetti Cawse, Pittsfield

Toll taken by Hoosac Wind

To the editor: On a Sunday in late April, Hoosac Wind was noisy into the early morning hours of the following Monday. I called the neighbor concern line for Iberdrola/Evangrid around 2 a.m. after not being able to sleep because of noise and vibrations from the project in our bedroom. Lois wasn't able to sleep either and we both got up this morning very tired and feeling beat!

This is three calls to the line by me since Feb. 20 with no response. Am I to think there will no longer be any response from Iberdrola/ Evangrid, and is this acceptable?

It is evident neighbors have given up on calling the line from lack of response and due to tainted protocol. I don't blame anyone for this exercise in futility. It's happened to me on various occasions, not wanting to waste time for nothing and become more frustrated.

Neighbors had the three calls and your out which inhibited calling the line. I intend to continue to call any time I'm kept from sleep because of noise from Hoosac Wind and make known what is going on.

I've been called a rabble-rouser and told my emails are angry by MassDEP.

What if you were walking in my shoes? I was recently diagnosed with lymphoma for the third time since 2015 and beginning treatment with many trips to Boston which take six hours round trip.

We leave at 4:30 a.m. for a series of tests that begin at 7:30 and I'm beat already, then Thursday repeat again! As if what is going on with virus isn't enough, I am dealing with cancer and noise from Hoosac Wind and not sleeping well.

I'm not suggesting my disease is being caused from Hoosac Wind, but it but has taken a toll and has inhibited my battles with cancer during the last five years! Also being treated as if I'm making complaints for nothing or no problem does make me angry!

It is well documented that sleep disturbances lower the immune system and cause a general decline of health over time. It's been over eight years now and I'm not the only neighbor who has issues because of Hoosac Wind and noise and vibrations!

Sound testing at Hoosac Wind so far has been manipulated to lower sound levels measured in various ways including having up to three turbines running during ambient sound measurements.

This is not acceptable, nor is it scientific and the facts will be forthcoming.

Larry Lorusso, Clarksburg

It's satisfying to help younger students

To the editor: Before the coronavirus started and ended our school year, the 6th-grade students at Greylock Elementary School in North Adams were making a positive impact on preschoolers and kindergarteners by showing them the right way to behave. Walking in the halls and using good manners are very important, and we as the older

students became the role models that showed them how it was done.

We were role models to them in many ways, including helping them get ready for recess. In doing so, we kept them from running and yelling in the hallway.

We modeled positive behavior because we were the big kids in the school and they looked up to us. It made me and the other 6th graders feel proud.

In being role models, we helped the little ones learn. For example, when doing art projects with them, we would have them count when needed, and write their names on their work. It made me feel good because I like helping people.

Another thing that we helped them understand was that sharing is caring. For example, when we would play together, I would always have them ask questions or respond to questions appropriately. I would help them to use their manners, because they were being kind and maybe they could become friends with a classmate.

When I was little, we didn't have the older kids helping us so I am very glad that I had the opportunity to help the younger students.

If you don't do things like this at your school, then I highly recommend that you ask your principal or teachers about doing this next year. If you start helping younger students, you will realize that it is very fun and you can change their lives in so many ways.

Leah Corl, North Adams, The writer is a 6th grader in Mary Ellen Ropelewski's class at Greylock Elementary School. The students were asked to pick a topic they were interested in and support their opinions with reason and evidence.

#### A balm for troubled times

To the editor: In reference to Elizabeth Baer's April 27 op-ed column "Lessons from the past for our present and future," this inspiring article pulls back the curtain on history to a shared moment of fear, pain and anguish, and the words of hope for endurance, reflection, and practical coping. Magnificent. Her insight into the words of Aeneas and Miriam's from the Torah, gave us such a gift of comfort.

Thank you, for your learning and this balm to our troubled selves.

### Sheila McKenna, Pittsfield

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# Democrats should keep an eye on Senate Trump's narcissism makes him unfit

February 18, 2020  $\mid$  Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA)

Section: Opinion | 1196 Words

Page: A04 OpenURL Link

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Democrats should keep an eye on Senate

To the editor: As the election season is upon us, I am curious about one aspect that hasn't gotten the attention it deserves: What about the Senate races for Democrats?

Two candidates, Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, are senators from states having Republican governors. If one were elected to the presidency, a Democrat (or progressive, since Bernie is an independent) is likely to be replaced by a Republican.

We can't afford to lose another seat! And we know that Mitch McConnell will be up to his tricks in the next Congress, stifling legislation while Republican senators draw in salaries and benefits for doing next to nothing.

Meanwhile, both Sanders and Warren remaining as senators can continue to create legislation and with a larger Democratic contingent could still get something done.

Sue Walker, North Adams

Trump's narcissism makes him unfit

To the editor: Why does the media look at MNPD like it's a four letter word? It's a four-letter acronym that explains every action of the worst and most corrupt president in our modern history.

Malignant narcissistic personality disorder. You would be hard-pressed to find anyone in the psychiatric world who would refute this diagnosis for President Donald Trump. Unfortunately they cannot legally comment because of the Goldwater Rule - a section of the American Psychiatric Association's Principles of Medical Ethics that precludes professional opinion about public figures that have not been formally examined and have not given consent.

Embracing the diagnosis explains anything and everything this person does. If anyone ever had any doubt, just look at his recent unnecessary firings of the honorable Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman and Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland, who could have quietly exited and planned on doing so. But Trump had to make a show of it because of the darkness within him.

Let's raise public awareness again and encourage the media to "go there." Because of his condition, there is no one on this planet less fit to be president of the United States of America than Donald Trump. Unfortunately he shows this on an almost

daily basis.

Neil Davis, Pittsfield

Prayers offered for Rockwell family

To the editor: I have visited the Rockwell Museum in Stockbridge a few times. I am so sorry to hear of the recent

death of Peter Rockwell. I am sending my prayers and condolences to the Rockwell family from North Carolina.

Richard Mattern, Roanoke Rapids, N.C.

Lt. Col. Vindman is a man of principle

To the editor: Of all the letters to the editor I have read over the years in The Eagle, Ed Dartford's of Feb. 12 was one of the most despicable ("White House was right to oust Vindman").

How can he defend a president who failed to serve his country because of so-called "bone spurs" and put down so egregiously Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, who served his country so nobly?

Mr. Dartford takes a page directly out of Trumps's play book - denigrating a decorated Iraq War veteran who bravely spoke up and told the truth in the House impeachment hearings.

Lt. Col. Vindman testified from direct knowledge (he was on the famous "perfect call") that it was "improper for the president" to coerce Ukraine to investigate a political opponent.

Apparently, Mr. Dartford admires his hero, Donald J. Trump, so much that he, too, enjoys bullying and making fun of Lt. Col. Vindman's uniform, calling him a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera character.

His depiction of Lt. Col. Vindman, whom the president fired out of pure revenge, is a sign of just how far some of the president's fans will go to support him.

Marie Lavinio, Housatonic

Dartford owes Vindman, veterans an apology

To the editor: In his Feb. 12 letter headlined "White House right to oust Vindman," Ed Dartford suggested that Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman should attend "boot camp" to "learn the soldier's duty to follow orders." If Mr. Dartford ever attended boot camp himself, he apparently missed the part about the military chain of command and its hierarchical structure.

As a National Security Advisor and an expert on the Ukraine assigned to monitor the president's July 25 call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, Vindman's duty was to report to his superiors any aspect of the conversation he deemed inappropriate or threatening to national security - which is exactly what he did. Those were his orders, and he had the courage to obey them.

In the words of retired Marine Corps General and former White House Chief of Staff John Kelly, Vindman "did exactly what we teach them to do". He "was compelled to report the president's disturbing actions". Dartford seems to confuse following military orders with personal loyalty to a president.

Also, Dartford seems to have an issue with the U.S. Army uniform, with his gratuitous complaint that it "reminded him of a Gilbert and Sullivan comic opera character." Despite criticisms from Fox News and other conservative sources on this topic, it is standard practice for officers to wear their uniforms while testifying on Capitol Hill; again, Vindman was following military protocol.

Alexander Vindman wears the same U.S. Army uniform that has been - and still is - worn with pride by many good men and women. A decorated veteran wounded in Iraq, he has worn this uniform with distinction for more than 20 years. I believe Dartford owes a lot of veterans, and especially Lt. Col. Vindman, a public apology. Richard C Henneberry, Melbourne, Fla.

The writer is a Pittsfield native and former longtime resident of the area.

No response on Hoosac Wind complaints

To the editor: Early the morning of Feb. 6, I was woken from noise and vibrations from Hoosac Wind yet again audible in our bedroom. The noise from the turbines was loud enough to wake me and I was not able to sleep.

I called the Landowner Concern Line even though the last four calls were ignored with no response over the last five months. Neighbors also tell me of a similar situation with calls to the line with no response from the company.

Does anyone wonder why neighbors don't call? Let me say lack of complaints isn't to do with lack of concerns by the neighbors. I debated getting out of bed because I wasn't rested but decided if nothing else to have it on the record and remind others what we are experiencing.

Wind turbines were running with icing conditions around the project yesterday, and I suspect that was part of the reason the turbines were noisy. Framed pictures were vibrating on walls during this event.

In the past we also have felt vibrations on windows because of the project at times. We have not been able to use anything to abate the noise and vibrations that emanate from the wind turbines and we continue to be impacted for more than eight years.

I have repeatedly asked the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection why, during ambient measurements, any turbines are running, and the reply has been "we don't know." When I asked a representative of the company why, he said "because MassDEP allows it." There is no scientific basic for this and gives Iberdrola/Avangrid an unfair advantage raising ambient measurements higher than the "actual" ambient sound in the area without turbine noise.

When is MassDEP going to enforce noise regulations in Massachusetts and protect the neighbors?

# Larry Lorusso, Clarksburg

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# Renewables key to future energy needs

April 21, 2018 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: SCOTT STAFFORD | Section: Business | 872 Words

Page: D01 OpenURL Link

#### BERKSHIRE BUSINESS

### The Berkshire Eagle

The future economy of Massachusetts will be shaped to a certain extent by the growing manufacture and installation of renewable power sources, such as wind turbines, solar panels and hydro generators.

And the faster renewables expand, the more quickly the economy will adjust to the new flow of energy sales and equipment transition. The extent of the costs incurred by a changing climate would be reduced as well.

According to Ben Hellerstein, state director of Environment Massachusetts, the technology already exists to provide the state with 100 percent of its power needs through renewable sources. The question is: How long will that take?

"We've only begun to tap our potential," Hellerstein said. "And if we put a solar panel on every rooftop, it would provide 47 percent of our energy. It's just staggering."

If the nation invested as much in renewable energy as it does in fossil fuel production, the effect on the economy would be second only to the reduction in greenhouse gases and particulate pollution in the air, he said. The reduction in health care costs alone would be significant.

"It's really exciting to think about redirecting the money we use to buy energy sources from out of state to buy locally- generated renewable energy- to the tune of \$23.8 billion- and invest it in things that help our environment, rather than polluting it, and protect people's health."

With renewable energy, the volatility of energy costs will disappear, Hellerstein noted, making it simpler for businesses to budget and more efficiently allocate resources.

"The faster we move to move past fossil fuels, the better off we'll be," he said. "And once we get there, chances are good Massachusetts will become an energy exporter in the coming years."

### LOCAL WIND FARMS

Two wind farms in the Berkshires are completed and operational. They represent 43.5 megawatts of power, and could generate enough electricity to power 16,000 homes. The most recent U.S. census estimate for the number of Berkshire County households is 54,854.

The Hoosac Wind Power Project is a 28.5-megawatt, 19-turbine installation on Bakke Mountain in the town of Florida and on Crum Hill in Monroe. It generates enough electricity to run about 10,000 homes.

The Berkshire Wind project, consisting of 10 wind turbines in Hancock and New Ashford, has a capacity of 15 megawatts, and generates enough electricity to power 6,000 homes. It is owned by members of the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Co. That firm sells the equivalent amount of energy generated by the turbines to users in central Massachusetts, but the actual power flows to the closest users in Berkshire County.

Not all the wind project proposals in the Berkshires have been as successful as those two. In Savoy, the town's

building inspector recently denied an application for a building permit for a project on West Hill. The developer, Minuteman Wind LLC, has appealed the decision, and a hearing will take place before the Zoning Board of Appeals. The date for the hearing has yet to be set.

RENEWABLES, Page 2

Renewables

FROM PAGE 1

A 2010 study conducted by GE Energy Applications & Systems Engineering for regional grid manager ISO New England found that power generated by land and ocean winds together is strong enough to supply 24 percent of the power used in New England by 2020.

According to the specifications for the two Berkshire wind projects, a megawatt generates enough power to service between 350 and 400 homes.

Still, the transition to an all-renewable energy-distribution model won't be easy.

"We'll have to invest a lot of money redirecting industry that is dependent on fossil fuels," Hellerstein said. "But we should be redirecting those investments - like instead of investing in a pipeline we know we won't need in a few years when we would be much better off investing in things we know we will need, like solar and wind."

Changes in the job market would also have to be coaxed along, and retraining those displaced from the fossil fuel industry would need to take place, he said.

State policies that have called for aggressive investment in renewable energy sources have paid off, Hellerstein added.

"Ten years ago we had hardly any solar," he said. "But thanks to policies the Legislature and Gov. [Deval] Patrick put in place, we've seen astronomical growth. Now we have three times as much solar power generation as in the state of Florida."

But growth has been slowed due to changes to the state's net metering policies, which allows consumers who use renewable energy sources to offset their energy use and transfer energy back to the utility companies in exchange for a credit.

"We are being held back by a piecemeal approach," Hellerstein said. "We're just not moving as fast as we need to. The longer we use fossil fuels, the more expensive and dangerous the climate will become and the longer we will have to put up with pollution and the associated health risks."

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# Changeable winds

December 24, 2017 | Worcester Telegram & Gazette (MA) Author: Elaine Thompson Telegram & Gazette Staff | Section: MA News | 2588 Words Page: A1 OpenURL Link

Massachusetts and other states are ramping up efforts to better harness wind as a bigger source of renewable, clean energy and the experience here has been generally favorable. Despite the demise of the Cape Wind project, much smaller wind turbine projects have generally proven to be a good investment.

However, in Central Massachusetts, Princeton is an exception. Residents there are not benefiting financially from the electricity generated from their \$7 million wind turbine project.

In addition to not being able to use energy from the two 15 megawatt turbines installed on the side of Wachusett Mountain in 2010, ratepayers have to make up the nearly half-million-dollar annual project deficit.

Brian Allen, manager of the Princeton Municipal Light Department, said the failed project is the result of a "business plan that didn't pan out the way it was supposed to." He notes he was not manager at the time.

In 2006, when energy was selling at about \$90 a megawatt, projections indicated that when the wind turbines went on line four years later, a megawatt of energy would sell for \$100 to \$115, he said.

But, right after the turbines were commissioned in 2010, the natural gas market took a dive. Instead of getting the projected price, the town receives \$30 per megawatt.

Having a business plan that included an agreement with an organization that would buy electricity at a certain rate instead of market rate might have been a better way to go, Mr. Allen said.

The annual cost of the turbines, including paying down the 20-year \$7.3 million bond and maintenance, is about \$900,000.

"We recover \$400,000 in energy we sell and renewable energy credits, which leaves us \$500,000 in the hole every year. Since 2010, we've had to absorb this," Mr. Allen said.

The shortfall is shared by the 1,500 residential customers, since the town has virtually has no commercial customers. The current rate is 24.75 cents per kilowatt hour. Without the turbines, it would be 19.75 cents per kw hour.

"In 2016, we would have had to get 28 cents a kw hour to break even. Nobody will pay us that because the market price people can buy energy is so low right now," he continued.

He said the towns of Sterling and West Boylston buy 25 percent of the output at 8 cents per kw hour. The other 75 percent goes into the market.

The town buys all of its energy from Florida-based NextEra Energy, which owns the largest number of wind turbines in the country; 6,000 mw of solar energy, as well as the lion's share of the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant in New Hampshire and the Florida Light and Power Co.

Mr. Allen said the project was too big for the town. It might have been better if the project was smaller, perhaps a smaller turbine, so the energy could all be used in town.

Mr. Allen said, to no avail, he reached out to the Patrick administration through state Sen. Harriette L. Chandler, D-Worcester, to try to get some financial assistance through the Clean Energy Technology Center and other means.

The state, he said, should be obligated to help the town because Princeton constructed the first wind turbines in the commonwealth in 1983. They were replaced by the two installed in 2009.

State officials at that time were excited because they saw this as an opportunity to pave the way for other communities and institutions to pursue wind energy, he said.

"That's all well and good, but it hasn't quite worked out the way we wanted it to," he said. "Doesn't the state have some obligation to push this along isn't there some culpability on the state's part?"

Ms. Chandler said she tried to help relieve Princeton of some of its financial burden, including costs associated with the mechanical breakdown of one of the turbines, but was unable to. The senator filed an amendment to the fiscal 2015 state budget that would have authorized the state Clean Energy Technology Center to spend up to \$2 million to buy renewable energy credits from the town.

Kevin E. Connor, spokesperson for the senator's office, said the money would have been "de facto funding to help relieve some of (Princeton's) debt burden."

He said current law prohibits the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center from providing grants to municipal plants such as Princeton, so this option to purchase certificates provided a method of financing debt relief for the municipal light plant.

The measure was adopted by the Senate, but did not make it through a House-Senate conference committee. Ms Chandler was not a member of the conference committee.

"Princeton was clearly trying to do the right thing. They thought wind was the answer," Ms. Chandler, who is acting Senate president, said. "This is an awful lot of money for a small community to lose and it would have a ripple effect on the town's budget."

She said in 2010-2011 the state was dealing with very tight budgets because of the recession.

"We thought maybe (the state) would deal with the crisis they (Princeton) were having financially. The answer was no at the time. I have not heard from Princeton since the amendment failed to get out of the conference committee. I think it's kind of limited what could be done now all this time later," she said.

She said she was not looking at her effort as a promise that had to be fulfilled by the state.

"I'm sure there are other communities across the state who have tried different technology and it hasn't worked for one reason or another. I'm not sure if the state has made any obligation to any city or town," she said.

Positive experiences with turbines

On the other hand, the experiences with wind turbines have been positive for several communities and institutions throughout the state and in Central Massachusetts. Among them are turbines installed at Holy Name Central Catholic Junior/Senior High School in Worcester, Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, North Central Correctional Institution in Gardner and the 10-turbine, 15-megawatt project atop Brodie Mountain in the Berkshire town of Hancock, which serves 14 municipal utilities, and eight communities - Ashburnham, Boylston, Holden, Paxton, Shrewsbury, Sterling, Templeton and West Boylston - in Worcester County.

Jeffery Quick, director of the state Division of Resource Management, said the two 1.6 mw turbines owned by the state Department of Correction that went online in 2013, have been very successful. They produce more than enough energy to provide all the electricity at the prison in Gardner, as well as the three DOC facilities in Shirley.

Part of the savings, including \$60,000 to \$80,000 quarterly from the sale of renewable energy credits, helps cover the cost of maintenance and pay down the 20-year \$10.3 million bond, he said. DOC has solar throughout the department, but the Gardner and Shirley DOC facilities are the only ones also served by wind turbines, he said.

"The Gardner site is probably one of the best wind sites in the state, until you get out in Western Massachusetts. That's why it was selected. We did a wind study with a meteorological tower for a year to collect wind speeds," he said. "It's been a great learning experience for this office and the facility as well."

The wind turbine installed at Worcester's Holy Name Central Catholic High School in 2008 has reduced the school's electricity bills from \$200,000 a year to \$40,000 a year. The school also recently agreed to lease a small site near the turbines for \$30,000 a year for National Grid to do a battery power storage study on the campus. The large batteries will store power that is not needed to be used when energy is not generated because of a lack of wind.

Holy Name Headmaster Edward Reynolds said in addition to the cost savings and environmental impact, the turbines and batteries are an authentic STEM experience that no other school can offer. After the midterm exams in February, the project will be integrated into the curriculum.

"I think it will raise their awareness of renewable energy and how well it can work. I also think it will have a profound effect on their study of science and math because they will have a real world application in their backyard that's going to be part of their study. They're very excited and eager to begin," Mr. Reynolds said.

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The Berkshire turbines were projected to operate at a capacity factor of about 40 percent and produce more than 52,500 mw hours of electricity annually, which is enough to power about 6,000 homes. The project was also expected to offset the production of nearly 612,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide and the use of 1.7 million barrels of oil.

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But not everyone is happy with the project.

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Mr. Tuohey said each side is looking to get the maximum benefits.

More turbines in the future

More renewable energy resources, including wind farms (on-shore and off-shore) are in the making as a result of legislation Gov. Charlie Baker signed into law in 2016 that requires the state's three energy distribution companies to solicit proposals for 1,200 megawatts of clean energy, including wind and hydropower; and an additional 1,600 megawatts of offshore wind energy.

Each has to acquire at least 400 megawatts of wind energy by June 30, 2020. The goal is to have 2,000 megawatts of off-shore and on-shore wind energy by 2020, up from the current 112 megawatts from 128 projects. The state also plans to increase its solar capacity.

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Matthew A. Beaton, secretary of the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, said the new requirements will make significant strides in further increasing the state's renewable energy portfolio and improving the cost-savings to rate payers. The three bidders will tell the DOER how much wind energy they will produce and at what price.

Barbara A. Durkin of Northboro, who devoted a decade to studying and opposing the failed Cape Wind project, said the new state legislation to ramp up the number of on-shore and off-shore wind farms is "wishful thinking." She said the standard design codes have not resolved the issues of failure, including internal and external corrosion of turbines. She prefers renewable energy sources of hydropower, which she says is more benign and cleaner, and nuclear power, which is efficient and clean.

Mr. Beaton said with three companies competing, unlike in the Cape Wind project, will result in the most competitive resources as the state sheds fossil fuels.

The state, he noted, has an aggressive renewable portfolio standard and the most aggressive greenhouse gas targets in the nation under the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act, which requires the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent below the 1990 baseline emissions level by 2020 and at least 80 percent by 2050.

He said there is a 1,200 mw proposal for renewable energy that would be the largest import of renewable energy in New England's history.

"We're doing a hell of a lot. And we have a long ways to go," he said. "Massachusetts has been No. 1 in energy efficiency for seven years in a row."

National Grid spokesman Robert Kievra said the company believes the solution to New England's energy challenge is a diversity of fuel sources. It supports renewable projects and policies consistent with the goal of reducing emissions while ensuring reliability and minimizing the cost impact to customers.

He said that in 2017, 22.3 percent of National Grid's electricity distributed in Massachusetts came from renewable sources.

"In 2018, we are obligated for 26.6 percent. By 2028, our obligation, under current regulations, will be at least 46.5 percent," he said in an email.

The two key components of the 2016 energy legislation: the clean energy and offshore wind components will provide pathways for Massachusetts to reach the targeted emissions reductions set out in the Global Warming Solutions Act.

"We are active participants in the evaluation of the bids for clean energy procurements and would expect, with the maturation of the offshore wind industry in the United States, that we will meet or exceed the timelines laid out in the legislation to support this industry," Mr. Kievra said.

Meanwhile, the wind energy industry continues to add jobs. There were more than 4,000 new jobs in the past year. That outpaces overall employment growth in Massachusetts, according to a new report.

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center released its annual survey on Wednesday. It found that the clean energy sector, including wind, solar, energy efficiency and other specialties, has seen an 81 percent increase in employment since 2010.

The industry employs 109,226 people in Massachusetts. Clean energy jobs grew at a 4 percent rate in the past year, adding 4,014 jobs since 2016 as statewide employment climbed by just 1.5 percent. Sixty-five percent of the renewable energy workforce has jobs in research, manufacturing, trade or solar deployment, 12 percent work in wind and the remaining 23 percent work in fields such as hydropower and bioenergy.

The report also found that 68 percent of workers in clean energy fields earn more than \$50,000 a year, and the industry generates \$11.4 billion in economic activity and 2.3 percent of the state's gross domestic product.

-State House News Service contributed to this report.

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Elaine Thompson; Telegram & Gazette Staff, 'Changeable winds', *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* (online), 24 Dec 2017 A1 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/16903DD732A0C508">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/16903DD732A0C508</a>



#### **MA News**

December 24, 2017 | Worcester Telegram & Gazette (MA) Author: Elaine Thompson Telegram & Gazette Staff| Section: MA News| 2588 Words Page: A5 OpenURL Link

Massachusetts and other states are ramping up efforts to better harness wind as a bigger source of renewable, clean energy and the experience here has been generally favorable. Despite the demise of the Cape Wind project, much smaller wind turbine projects have generally proven to be a good investment.

However, in Central Massachusetts, Princeton is an exception. Residents there are not benefiting financially from the electricity generated from their \$7 million wind turbine project.

In addition to not being able to use energy from the two 15 megawatt turbines installed on the side of Wachusett Mountain in 2010, ratepayers have to make up the nearly half-million-dollar annual project deficit.

Brian Allen, manager of the Princeton Municipal Light Department, said the failed project is the result of a "business plan that didn't pan out the way it was supposed to." He notes he was not manager at the time.

In 2006, when energy was selling at about \$90 a megawatt, projections indicated that when the wind turbines went on line four years later, a megawatt of energy would sell for \$100 to \$115, he said.

But, right after the turbines were commissioned in 2010, the natural gas market took a dive. Instead of getting the projected price, the town receives \$30 per megawatt.

Having a business plan that included an agreement with an organization that would buy electricity at a certain rate instead of market rate might have been a better way to go, Mr. Allen said.

The annual cost of the turbines, including paying down the 20-year \$7.3 million bond and maintenance, is about \$900,000.

"We recover \$400,000 in energy we sell and renewable energy credits, which leaves us \$500,000 in the hole every year. Since 2010, we've had to absorb this," Mr. Allen said.

The shortfall is shared by the 1,500 residential customers, since the town has virtually has no commercial customers. The current rate is 24.75 cents per kilowatt hour. Without the turbines, it would be 19.75 cents per kw hour.

"In 2016, we would have had to get 28 cents a kw hour to break even. Nobody will pay us that because the market price people can buy energy is so low right now," he continued.

He said the towns of Sterling and West Boylston buy 25 percent of the output at 8 cents per kw hour. The other 75 percent goes into the market.

The town buys all of its energy from Florida-based NextEra Energy, which owns the largest number of wind turbines in the country; 6,000 mw of solar energy, as well as the lion's share of the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant in New Hampshire and the Florida Light and Power Co.

Mr. Allen said the project was too big for the town. It might have been better if the project was smaller, perhaps a smaller turbine, so the energy could all be used in town.

Mr. Allen said, to no avail, he reached out to the Patrick administration through state Sen. Harriette L. Chandler, D-Worcester, to try to get some financial assistance through the Clean Energy Technology Center and other means.

The state, he said, should be obligated to help the town because Princeton constructed the first wind turbines in the commonwealth in 1983. They were replaced by the two installed in 2009.

State officials at that time were excited because they saw this as an opportunity to pave the way for other communities and institutions to pursue wind energy, he said.

"That's all well and good, but it hasn't quite worked out the way we wanted it to," he said. "Doesn't the state have some obligation to push this along isn't there some culpability on the state's part?"

Ms. Chandler said she tried to help relieve Princeton of some of its financial burden, including costs associated with the mechanical breakdown of one of the turbines, but was unable to. The senator filed an amendment to the fiscal 2015 state budget that would have authorized the state Clean Energy Technology Center to spend up to \$2 million to buy renewable energy credits from the town.

Kevin E. Connor, spokesperson for the senator's office, said the money would have been "de facto funding to help relieve some of (Princeton's) debt burden."

He said current law prohibits the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center from providing grants to municipal plants such as Princeton, so this option to purchase certificates provided a method of financing debt relief for the municipal light plant.

The measure was adopted by the Senate, but did not make it through a House-Senate conference committee. Ms Chandler was not a member of the conference committee.

"Princeton was clearly trying to do the right thing. They thought wind was the answer," Ms. Chandler, who is acting Senate president, said. "This is an awful lot of money for a small community to lose and it would have a ripple effect on the town's budget."

She said in 2010-2011 the state was dealing with very tight budgets because of the recession.

"We thought maybe (the state) would deal with the crisis they (Princeton) were having financially. The answer was no at the time. I have not heard from Princeton since the amendment failed to get out of the conference committee. I think it's kind of limited what could be done now all this time later," she said.

She said she was not looking at her effort as a promise that had to be fulfilled by the state.

"I'm sure there are other communities across the state who have tried different technology and it hasn't worked for one reason or another. I'm not sure if the state has made any obligation to any city or town," she said.

Positive experiences with turbines

On the other hand, the experiences with wind turbines have been positive for several communities and institutions throughout the state and in Central Massachusetts. Among them are turbines installed at Holy Name Central Catholic Junior/Senior High School in Worcester, Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, North Central Correctional Institution in Gardner and the 10-turbine, 15-megawatt project atop Brodie Mountain in the Berkshire town of Hancock, which serves 14 municipal utilities, and eight communities - Ashburnham, Boylston, Holden, Paxton, Shrewsbury, Sterling, Templeton and West Boylston - in Worcester County.

Jeffery Quick, director of the state Division of Resource Management, said the two 1.6 mw turbines owned by the state Department of Correction that went online in 2013, have been very successful. They produce more than enough energy to provide all the electricity at the prison in Gardner, as well as the three DOC facilities in Shirley.

Part of the savings, including \$60,000 to \$80,000 quarterly from the sale of renewable energy credits, helps cover the cost of maintenance and pay down the 20-year \$10.3 million bond, he said. DOC has solar throughout the department, but the Gardner and Shirley DOC facilities are the only ones also served by wind turbines, he said.

"The Gardner site is probably one of the best wind sites in the state, until you get out in Western Massachusetts. That's why it was selected. We did a wind study with a meteorological tower for a year to collect wind speeds," he said. "It's been a great learning experience for this office and the facility as well."

The wind turbine installed at Worcester's Holy Name Central Catholic High School in 2008 has reduced the school's electricity bills from \$200,000 a year to \$40,000 a year. The school also recently agreed to lease a small site near the turbines for \$30,000 a year for National Grid to do a battery power storage study on the campus. The large batteries will store power that is not needed to be used when energy is not generated because of a lack of wind.

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# Town weighs ban on wind turbines

December 20, 2017 | Republican, The (Springfield, MA) Author: Mary C. Serreze | Section: NEWS | 333 Words Page: A005 OpenURL Link

The tiny Berkshire County hilltown of Savoy, population 700, could ban all wind turbines at back-to-back public meetings set for today and tomorrow.

Twenty percent of Savoy's voters signed a petition to eliminate a 2008 provision of the zoning code that allows and encourages wind facilities.

Some residents have long complained about the Hoosac Wind project in nearby Monroe and Florida, and have also battled Minuteman Wind LLC's permit for a \$31 million five-turbine project in Savoy near the Hawley line.

If the zoning change passes this week, it would not affect the long-simmering, 12.5-megawatt Minuteman proposal, which is stalled due to other reasons, according to the Berkshire Eagle.

Minuteman proponent Palmer Capital Corp., which recently took over the long-dormant project, had its state wetlands permit in hand when it approached the town for a height increase to more than 450 feet. Following a contentious public hearing last fall, voters at a special Town Meeting said no.

The permitting process has had many twists and turns. It's unclear now whether the Minuteman project will move forward.

As recently as June, residents authorized a payment in lieu of taxes agreement with Palmer Capital to bring revenue to the town, which hosts many acres of nontaxable state forest. The site in question is owned by longtime resident Harold "Butch" Malloy, who has a 20-year lease arrangement with Minuteman Wind LLC.

Meanwhile, opponents say low-frequency noise from turning wind turbine blades is a health hazard that interrupts peace and restful sleep. They have cited impacts to wildlife, real estate values and scenic beauty. The turbines would be visible from Savoy, Hawley, and parts of Charlemont, Florida, Windsor and Plainfield.

Palmer Capital Corp., based in Cohasset, specializes in financing and developing tax-oriented alternative energy projects, according to its website.

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Mary C. Serreze, 'Town weighs ban on wind turbines', *Republican, The* (online), 20 Dec 2017 A005 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/16F0E5108D75E088">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/16F0E5108D75E088</a>



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# SAVOY - Town might renege on plan for wind power - Meetings set to decide on zoning bylaw rework

December 6, 2017 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: LARRY PARNASS | Section: Main | 674 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

The Berkshire Eagle

SAVOY - One of the first Berkshires towns to allow wind power is poised to prohibit it - before any blades turn.

The turnabout would not affect Minuteman Wind LLC's permit for a \$31 million, five-turbine project on West Hill near the Hawley line.

But the status of that venture remains unclear after a September setback.

Meantime, a petition signed by more than one-fifth of Savoy's registered voters will trigger back-to-back meetings this

month.

WIND, Page 4

FROM PAGE 1

The first, Dec. 20, will convene a public hearing on a proposal that the town delete Section 9 of its zoning bylaw, which spells out terms of wind power generation, and add language prohibiting it.

The second, Dec. 21, will ask residents to decide on those changes. Both sessions will start at 6:30 p.m. in the town's 17 Center Road fire station.

Savoy's wind power bylaw was approved a decade ago, before construction of the nearby Hoosac Wind project in Monroe and Florida.

For years, Minuteman Wind's venture percolated along out of sight, as it faced environmental reviews and delays.

With final approval in hand from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, plans for the 12.5-megawatt installation resurfaced in late 2016, with Palmer Capital Corp. managing it.

In an effort to increase the 425-foot height of its turbines, Minuteman Wind proposed a bylaw change to residents at a special town meeting this fall, only to be soundly rebuffed.

The company said that by increasing the height 30 feet, it could boost electrical output 15 to 20 percent and be in a position to pay more to the town.

Residents said no. Just 53 people backed the change, with 126 against, well short of the two-thirds majority necessary to pass. The Sept. 27 meeting was preceded by a contentious public hearing.

In 2008, two-thirds of residents backed creation of the wind power bylaw, many enticed by promises of new municipal revenues.

Views on wind power in Savoy had changed since 2008, said Salvatore Raciti of Brier Road.

"I think it was largely an economic vote," he said of the earlier approval.

After the September meeting, Raciti and others shaped a plan to prohibit future wind power projects. They fanned out through town and gathered 119 signatures of registered voters on 18 petitions, obtaining about half the names in two Saturday visits to the transfer station.

"They braved the dump on Saturday and Wednesday night," Raciti said of the petition group.

The town has 501 registered voters, according to Town Clerk Brenda Smith. One person signed twice and four people who signed are not registered to vote.

John Tynan, the Select Board chairman, said the petition movement picked up on dismay generated in the fall public hearing.

He said petitioners will speak at the Dec. 20 hearing. The Planning Board will then discuss the issue and make a recommendation in time for the next day's special town meeting.

"We listen to the residents. If that's how they feel, we go the same way," said Tynan, who also serves on the Planning Board, along with fellow Select Board members Russell Clarke and Keith Kupiec.

"That's the same way it was 10 years ago, when they seemed to want it," he said of residents' views of wind power.

Lindsay Deane-Mayer, Palmer Capital's project manager, could not be reached for comment Tuesday on where the Minuteman Wind project stands.

She told The Eagle in October that failure to secure the bylaw change changed fundamentals of the project and that a decision might not be made until 2018.

"It's a big puzzle, and all the pieces have to come together," she said at the time. "Everything was coming together. Now, it's spreading apart."

Tynan said the town has not heard from Minuteman. Negotiations over payments in lieu of taxes from the project remain sidelined.

Raciti said that if Minuteman Wind opts to pursue its project, the change now proposed would stop other wind power development.

"It basically closes the door behind them," Raciti said of Minuteman Wind.

Larry Parnass can be reached at lparnass@berkshireeagle.com, at @larryparnass on Twitter and 413-496-6214.

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#### • Citation (aglc Style)

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

September 26, 2017 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Section: Opinion | 1134 Words Page: A04 OpenURL Link

Auction house terms a mystery and a concern

To the editor: Regarding a reference in The Eagle article "Cultural group calls for halt to art sale" (Sept. 21) that the Massachusetts Cultural Council did not know the terms of the Berkshire Museum's auction contract with Sotheby's: Since auction houses generally desire good relations with the museum community and need a constant supply of quality works to sell, they often make terms quite favorable to art institutions and sellers, not infrequently imposing no sellers' fees at all for the most valuable works.

If the Berkshire Museum director and board did not negotiate favorable terms regarding commission fees and withdrawal of consignments, they are even more incompetent than I had thought.

Ira Licht, West Stockbridge

Museum plan fits city's cultural plan

To the editor: The Berkshire Museum, our community museum, is at the center of what has become a bitter controversy. After years of financial struggle, the museum's leadership has made a big decision, a difficult decision, but one that will guarantee the museum's sustainability long into the future.

During my years as mayor, I worked closely with the nonpro fit cultural organizations in our city, and I understand all too well the challenges they face. Here in Pittsfi eld, the changing environment for business has meant a changing environment for philanthropy, with fewer corporations to support cultural partners. And we all know about the changes in state and federal support.

A critical part of the job was to set a vision for the community. At the Berkshire Museum, they have set a vision, that of a thriving museum that supports our students and teachers and offers exciting educational opportunities for everyone in the community. The museum has a proven track record of service to children and families over the years - in fact, demand for its educational programs increases all the time. The number of kids who experience the museum on field trips and in outreach programs just gets bigger.

What I see as most exciting is the possible economic impact that a financially healthy anchor institution in the heart of Pittsfield could have. Imagine the possibilities of year-round super-charged programs and activities, and the opportunities to collaborate with their cultural neighbors. And it is clear that the museum leadership listened to the community when it included an increased emphasis on science in its plans - a move that will differentiate our museum, making it an exciting destination we can all be proud of. And by staying true to its mission, the museum will integrate its increased science emphasis with history and art. Plans also include increased attention to artists living and working in the Berkshires today, with a gallery devoted to showing local artists and other people who make and create.

When my administration took the stand that cultural development would be a key to revitalize Pittsfi eld, we met with opposition from many quarters. The museum's plans are a perfect fit for what Pittsfield needs now, a truly "next big thing" in cultural development, while striving to transform lives.

I fully support the leadership of the museum's board of trustees and Van Shields, who faced the fundamental stewardship question: Given the Berkshire Museum's important role in our community, how do we ensure it will not

only survive, but thrive? James M. Ruberto, Pittsfield The writer is the former mayor of Pittsfield.

Savoy should be wise about wind turbines

To the editor: If the powers that be (state agencies) really wanted to know how people felt about IWTs (industrial wind turbines), don't you think they should ask the people who are forced to live under these ungodly monsters?

Ask me - I'm one of them - and I'll tell you what it's like. I have headaches whenever I stay at home and my wife's ears ring around the clock. It's like living next to an airport and the planes never land - nor do they ever go away.

Yes, sometimes it's a not quite as loud as others; that's when the wind hits your house before the turbines. But when it is the other way around and the wind is coming off those turbines toward your house, it is constant and unending bombardment, day and night. I'm about half a mile away from the closest (1.5 G.E. 340-foot turbine, one of 19, called the Hoosac Wind Project). It turns your life upside down and you don't know where to go, where to go to get some sleep, where to go to get help, where to go to live or what to do next. If you love your home like I did, your dream is gone.

My peaceful world of 30-plus years is gone! My hope and desire for this to be a place of solitude for my grandkids and their grandkids is gone. My thoughts of spending the rest of my days and having my ashes scattered in my own backyard are gone. My constitutional right to the "pursuit of happiness" is gone, because how can I pursue happiness if I cannot feel my family is safe in our own home?

If you would like to learn more about IWTs or my world, please come visit me. All of Savoy and anyone who wants to hear and learn some truth about living with the nightmare under an industrial wind project is welcome in my home.

Falmouth residents, after a seven-year court battle, have finally won and the judge ordered two town-owned Vestas turbines shut down permanently - costing the residents around \$100,000, and the town millions.

Residents of Savoy, for your own sake, do what you can, now, before it is too late! I pray you don't end up where I am today. Vote wisely; don't let a few bucks to your town change your lives forever!

Michael Fairneny, Florida

Support Clarksburg school renovation

To the editor: Residents of Clarksburg, please come out to vote on the school renovation project on Wednesday. Help to continue the exceptional education for which our town is known. Keep our children attending school with their neighbors, often taught by their neighbors. Our town-run school is the dearest enticement to new home buyers and helps keep all property values in town stable and viable.

The state has approved the town's plan and will pay the better half of the cost. The project entails a comprehensive fix for several problems: cramped space, an old boiler, a building not universally accessible, and hazardous building materials, to list some. If we don't support this project we risk losing our school and our voices in how our children are educated.

According to our town manager, Clarksburg has the fourth lowest tax rate in the county. The increase in property taxes from this project will be \$3.25 per thousand according to a fact sheet compiled by the town and available at the town hall. Our children are the future of our world. Invest in them.

Voting by ballot takes place at 6:30 p.m. in the school gym. Hope to see you there.

Marty C. Beattie, Clarksburg

# • Citation (aglc Style)

'LETTERS TO THE EDITOR', *Berkshire Eagle, The* (online), 26 Sep 2017 A04 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1672932365A037A8">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1672932365A037A8</a>



# COMMENTARY - What the wind may blow

September 26, 2017  $\mid$  Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA)

Section: Berkshires | 1100 Words

Page: B01 OpenURL Link

FLORIDA - Michael Fairneny invites you to his home. Everyone, come visit. He insists. It's way up, just off the Mohawk Trail, the Berkshires' top shelf, where the county holds for safekeeping its lovely curiosities, including the town of Florida, which, according to Fairneny, is not so lovely anymore. But come. You be the judge. Maybe he'll invite you onto his back deck, which affords a spectacular southern view of ridgelines that make the Rockies seem redundant.

"Twelve acres and a view," says Fairneny, who has lived in this small, well-kept, shoebox-shaped home with his wife, Joanne, for the past 36 years. They raised two kids here. "This was my dream," he says.

Then, five years ago, the nightmare began.

To that point, Fairneny, 64, who displays a prickly impatience for pretense, doesn't wish to dwell on the back deck. It's his front porch where he holds court these days. From the front porch, you see the blades of industrial wind turbines appearing and disappearing along the ridgeline just a half a mile to the north.

"You can't hear them right now," he says.

The wind is blowing from the east rather than west. When it blows from the west, you get the direct hit, the "thumpthump" or the "whoop-whoop" and "it's like living next to an airport and the planes never land," he says. "My peaceful world of 30-plus years is gone."

The turbines are among 19 that comprise the Hoosac Wind Power Project in Florida and Monroe. They went online in 2012. You can see them twirling like a pod of pinwheels from points throughout Northern Berkshires, a \$90-plus million merit badge demonstrating the commonwealth's commitment to clean energy.

Neighbors have complained about their noise since practically Day One. The turbines have plenty of admirers as well.

If you visit Fairneny - and people are; people from Savoy, in particular, where a wind farm is being proposed - he will likely employ colorful language to explain to you why industrial wind turbines are a bad deal from the standpoint of noise, alleged health risks, and impact on the environment and property values.

"We're screwed here," he says, "but I still feel compelled to speak out and tell people from other towns what they're inviting."

He may even take you for a ride around the neighborhood to get a closer look. Hoosac's turbines rise about 340 feet, including blades.

Echoing complaints of some turbine neighbors around the country, he says his wife suffers a chronic condition as a result of the turbines, in her case, ringing in her ears whenever she's home. Still, his wife would prefer him to dwell on healthier pursuits than fighting wind turbines.

He had a heart attack recently. He wears a pacemaker. He says he'd rather be gardening. But standing up against turbines is a matter of principle at this point.

He even refused to sign a so-called good neighbor agreement with the owners of Hoosac Wind, the Spanish-based Iberdrola electric utility. They offered him \$2,000 up front and another \$2,000 annually "so I would shut my mouth," Fairneny says.

A spokesman for Iberdrola, Paul Copelman, says Iberdrola does offer neighbors agreements that can entail regular monetary payments. He did not know the specifics of what Fairneny was offered and whether it would prohibit Fairneny from publicly speaking out against the turbines.

Fairneny, who runs a restaurant at Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort, has picketed projects in Vermont. He's met in living rooms and town halls with people across Massachusetts where wind projects have been planned. And he and his front porch have recently become an unlikely epicenter of opposition to plans in Savoy to put up five wind turbines, a 12.5 megawatt project proposed by Minuteman Wind and Palmer Capital Corp. that's the subject of a special town meeting at the Savoy Fire Station at 6 p.m. Wednesday.

On this past Thursday morning, Fairneny sits on his front porch with his friend Larry Lorusso, who lives down the hill in Clarksburg, a fellow opponent to the 28.5-megawatt Hoosac Wind project.

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("When they're cranking, it's difficult, if not impossible, to sleep," Lorusso says.) The two are discussing megawatts, the "pipe dream" (Fairneny's phrase) of game-changing clean energy, the health risks of infrasound, and a judge's ruling in June that forced two turbines in Falmouth to be shut down because they were deemed a nuisance.

Another full-fledged turbine opponent has just pulled down the driveway in a gray pickup truck, a bearded man in green suspenders.

"Is this Michael Fairneny's place?" the man calls up from the driveway.

"Yes," Fairneny says. "I am Michael Fairneny."

"I'm Salvatore Raciti," he says. "We spoke on the phone."

Yes, yes. Come, come. Welcome, welcome. Raciti, of Savoy, takes a seat on the front porch, and the men talk turbines. In Savoy, says a guardedly optimistic Raciti, the proverbial "fat lady" has not only not sung on the turbine project, but she's "not even in sight."

Ten miles to the south, in Savoy, a man on a different front porch would beg to differ. Harold "Butch" Malloy, 64, of Chapel Road says he fully expects wind turbines to be built upon his 300 acre undeveloped property on West Hill. Late last year, the state signed off on the project, and the town issued a permit. Voters in Savoy will decide Wednesday whether to approve a change to the town's wind bylaw that would allow for longer turbine blades. If voters deny the change, "we'll just use smaller blades," Malloy says.

In Savoy, there are neighbors for and adamantly against the project. As is the case in Florida, turbines are tearing up relationships.

Malloy, who has worked in oil fields out west and at hydroelectric and nuclear facilities back east, says, "We can't keep burning fossil fuels the way we do. Something has to change."

That's not his only motivation. The town of Savoy stands to gain an annual payment in lieu of taxes in the six figures. The town and developers are hammering out an agreement. Malloy declines to comment how much he, himself, will receive in annual payments, only to say it'll be less than six figures.

He has a stack of freshly printed pamphlets put together by Minuteman that seek to address many of the issues raised by Fairneny and others. Malloy will fold them by hand.

He's standing on his back deck now, a wide, spectacular view.

"From here, I'll be able to see three of them," he says, referring to the proposed turbines, which would rise 453 feet or 425 feet, depending on what voters decide. "I wish I could see them all."

Another back deck, another man, another dream. Felix Carroll is The Eagle's community columnist. Reach him at fcarroll@berkshireeagle.com.

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# Economic, broadband efforts praised in Readsboro

September 23, 2017 | Bennington Banner (VT) Section: Main | 561 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

By Ed Damon

edamon@benningtonbanner.com

READSBORO - Gov. Phil Scott was in town Friday, meeting with community members working to boost the local economy and expand highspeed broadband internet service.

Residents and local and state officials gathered at the E.J. Bullock Building on Main Street. Volunteerled economic development efforts were touted and two new projects were detailed that will bring high-speed internet to new areas of both Readsboro and Whitingham.

"This work demonstrates the value of working together - finding common ground towards a common goal," Scott said.

Soon, some under-served areas in towns will have broadband, according to Clay Purvis, director for the Department of Public Service's telecommunications and connectivity division. FairPoint Communications will provide DSL-based broadband internet to 56 addresses in the Bennington County town of Readsboro, and another 100 in the Windham County town of Whitingham, he said. In addition. Southern Vermont Broadband Cooperative will bring service to a handful of additional under-served lo- cations in Readsboro.

That's possible through a public-private partnership, said Jeffrey Austin, Fair-Point's director of government relations.

In attendance were numerous town officials, as well as State Sen. Brian Campion (D-Bennington) and State Rep. Laura Sibilia (I-Dover).

Local historian A1 Scaia led a tour and talk of the E.J. Bullock building. Susan Bailey, president of Readsboro Hometown Redevelopment, Inc., said it shows the town's rich history, having served as a major business resource for many years. That nonprofit acquired it in 2009 and it's since obtained grant funding to shore-up the building, constructed in 1890. A new partnership with Readsboro Arts has brought a gallery to the first-floor, open from May to October. Bailey said her group wants to have the building

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heated so it can be used yearround and is looking towards opening the upper floors of the 12,000 squarefoot building up for things like small businesses and startups.

"We're a small community with a small population, but brave of heart and are a very vital part of the overall Vermont landscape," she said.

A 12-member board of directors oversees that nonprofit, a volunteer effort like the broadband cooperative founded in 2005.

Scott praised members of both groups. Of the cooperative members, he noted they learned from scratch on how to build a wireless network and prov internet service, and negotiate leases for space on neighboring towers and install equipment. Today, SVBC serves most of Stamford and half of Readsboro.

Residents without highspeed broadband service need a dial-up modem or a satellite service to access the internet.

Multi-year efforts to expand broadband has taken a lot of community involvement, said Robert Briggs, president of SVBC. A broadcast antenna was installed at the elementary school over 10 years ago and other signal repeaters have since been installed.

In 2014, SVBC entered an agreement with Avangrid, the developer behind the Hoosac Wind Project. That allowed the cooperative to put equipment on a tower on Bakke Mountain in Florida, Mass. for broadband internet and also communications for public safety.

New equipment on another tower on Crum Hill in Monroe, Mass. would expand broadband into the west end of Readsboro, Briggs said.

"It's a very exciting project," he said. Reach staff writer Edward Damon at 802-447-7567, ext. 111 or @edamonbanner.

Vermont Gov. Phil Scott tours Main Street in Readsboro on Friday morning.

### HOLLY PELCZYNSKI BENNINGTON BANNER

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

September 22, 2017 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Section: Opinion | 1190 Words Page: A04 OpenURL Link

Rally offers hope on opioid epidemic

To the editor: There are 30 deaths from opioids in Berkshire County each year. Most are young. Their families will never recover from their deaths. But there is hope!

Berkshire County, and especially North Adams, have many options for treatment and recovery. On Saturday, join us for the Fifth Annual Voices for Recovery 2017 Rally, Walk and Vigil, to raise awareness of all the help that's available for recovery from substance abuse. Gather at 1 p.m. at Colegrove Park on Church Street in North Adams. A walk down Main Street will be followed by a rally and speakers back at Colegrove.

There will be fun and games, face painting for children, music by Common Folk, and much more! For more information, visit nbccoalition.org or call Wendy Penner at 413 663-7588.

Dianne Olsen, North Adams

Trump jeopardizes a good Iran accord

To the editor: Trump's misleading and belligerent speech at the United Nations this week regarding the peace treaty with Iran could tempt Iran to abandon any restraint it may have and spark a greater conflict in the Middle East.

To quote Benjamin Franklin, "There never was a good war, or a bad peace" (Poor Richard's Almanac).

Carl Olson, Pittsfield

Inequities in income a real county problem

To the editor: I read the Sept. 15 Boston Globe article "Locals struggle as tourism booms" with great interest and empathy. I also read The Eagle's Sept. 17 editorial "Wealthy in county are part of solution to economic woes" and am sorry to see such a simplistic response to the large issue highlighted by the Globe's reporting.

In the Globe article, Steven Picheny notes a police officer in Great Barrington can't afford to buy a home in the community he protects. And that is the point the Globe article is making - not that people feel disdain toward tourists and second-home owners, but that the housing market (some may say the retail shops, the restaurants, the attractions as well) caters toward an average visitor (or resident) making \$100,000 a year or more while the median local income is much less, and where residents struggle to maintain year-round employment in order to afford their apartments or homes, often cost-burdened to the point of paying more than 50 percent of their income toward housing costs alone.

In Lenox, for example, we know that nearly half (47 percent) of our households qualify as low to moderate income. That could be a household of two making no more than \$51,200 a year or a family of four making \$64,000 a year. What home can this family of four purchase? A home priced at around \$175,000. How many of these two-plus bedroom homes exist in the Lenox area today? According to Zillow, seven in Lenox and Lee. Throughout the region, residents pay at least half of their income just toward housing costs.

Local developers creating new ownership stock promise a new product priced "around" \$600,000; local developers creating new rental stock describe their market as affluent weekend residents who want the second home in the Berkshires but not the hassle of a whole house and its maintenance needs. A new apartment is offered on Airbnb for short-term stays, not for year-round leases. A hospitality developer says that's the way things are: You have your resort towns and your service towns.

Inequity throughout the region is exhibited in different ways: the dearth of housing opportunity congruent with wages; the lack of public transportation service congruent with needs; the attainment of broadband by small, affluent communities but not by our population centers; and the high-quality educational experiences offered in some school districts but not every school district.

The workers who pick up the lawn at the end of a Tanglewood concert, or the folks who plow the roads during a blizzard, drive the cruisers and fire trucks every day, pump out your septic system, teach your kids and give you your flu shot - our communities and our region depend on them year-round, and where and how they live is just as important as how the visitor or seasonal resident experiences the Berkshires.

Gwen M. Miller, Housatonic The writer is the town planner in Lenox.

Volunteers critical to success of The Josh

To the editor: I spent the last Sunday at The Josh Billings RunAground assisting my wife who was doing the kayak portion of the event. Everywhere I looked, there were people assisting participants and spectators to make sure things went as smoothly as possible. These volunteers are the unsung heroes of the day. I would like to recognize the group of high school-age volunteers who were assisting those getting their watercraft in and out of Stockbridge Bowl. Many of them stood in the water to help expedite this process.

My hat goes off to this group. Thank you and a job well done!

Joseph Wilk, Cheshire

Negatives outweigh benefits of neighbors from hell

To the editor: The upcoming vote in Savoy about increasing the height of the 425-foot high limitation in the town to 455 feet has me very concerned for the neighbors. These are not windmills, these are huge industrial wind turbines, as tall as the tallest buildings in Massachusetts! And what is the return?

As someone who lives about a mile from wind turbines at Hoosac Ridge, I know from first-hand experience how industrial wind turbines wreck the environment as well as steal peace and quiet from our rural neighborhoods. As if what you see and hear isn't bad enough, the vibrations from living too close to the Neighbors from Hell are worse.

The thumping can go on for days and nights with little to no respite. Sleep eludes us, taking a toll. Headaches, dizziness, sinus issues, palpitations, tinnitus, anxiety, hypertension, and heart disease are some of the symptoms people experience. This is extensively documented and peer-reviewed. This is no joke!

The irony is we are being told these wind turbines are improving the environment, but the fact is that manufacturing, transportation, installation, maintenance and decommissioning take a heavy toll on the environment. The real benefit is financial, to land owners and the developers in the way of tax subsidies, along with low- and no-interest loans, and grants. The production of electricity available to the grid is incidental and a relatively small percentage of generation.

Nearby Hoosac Wind, rated at 28,500 MW, added 0.0016 percent of generation in Massachusetts in 2015 at a cost of \$90 million to build. Iberdrola pays about \$125,000 each a year to Florida and Monroe instead of paying taxes like the rest of us. Keep in mind that wind turbines on the average only generate 25 percent of the rated capacity and not necessarily when demand calls for it.

Everyone loses except the developers and those on the payroll. Meanwhile our mountains are being blasted, bulldozed and filled in for little to no benefit to the neighbors who have to live with such an invasion into our communities. Destroying the ridges and allowing these behemoths isn't going to make the world a better place, now or in the future. Time for people to take personal responsibility for resource use and stop thinking they needn't feel guilty for the way they live and its impact while others suffer from these projects.

Please stop and think before you let this happen!

## Larry Lorusso, Clarksburg

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# SAVOY - Wind-power hearing draws fire - Opponents dominate meeting, steer debate away from topic

August 25, 2017 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: LARRY PARNASS | Section: Berkshires | 1054 Words Page: B01 OpenURL Link

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SAVOY - A half hour into a public hearing Thursday night at the Savoy firehouse, Bobby LaBonte and more than half a dozen others walked out.

He paused in the parking lot to explain why.

"This meeting just got carried away, because of too many people from out of town," he said. "We just got sick of hearing it."

While the official business was a proposal to increase the maximum height of already approved windpower turbines, the hearing turned into a wider and contentious critique of wind power's safety in rural communities.

No votes were taken. The question of whether a project in the making since 2004 can increase its height by 30 feet will be decided at a future special Town Meeting.

John Tynan, Savoy's Select Board chairman, said after the hour-long hearing he warned representatives of Minuteman Wind LLC and their partner, Palmer Capital Corp., that an attempt to adjust a bylaw passed in 2008 could be controversial.

"It's going to open up the whole discussion again," he said.

And it did.

People in a crowd of about 70 used the occasion to challenge the project for which Minuteman Wind holds a permit.

Tynan and Lindsay Deane-Mayer, a representative of Palmer Capital of Cohasset, fielded questions and comments about Minuteman's project, as members of the audience raised concerns about the health effects of low-frequency "infrasound."

Nancy Shea rose to say she moved from Tilda Hill in Florida after the Hoosac Wind Power Project turbines were erected in Florida and Monroe.

"Infrasound will make you sick, if you can't afford to move," she said.

Shea asked how a proposal to increase the maximum turbine height

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from 425 to 455 feet in Savoy would affect low-frequency noise.

Deane-Mayer countered that a noise study had been submitted earlier when Minuteman Wind secured its permit for

the five-turbine project on West Hill, on the town's eastern border with Hawley.

And she said "there is not scientific consensus" about such sound, drawing murmurs from the audience.

Shea was just one of several people from outside Savoy to speak.

Janet Sinclair of Buckland spoke of efforts to counter wind-power projects in Shelburne Falls. "Please think about who's living nearby," she said.

Lloyd Crawford of Hawley, who owns the Stump Sprouts cross-country ski area in that town, also appealed to a sense of community.

"Think about your neighbors. This neighbor says, 'Why don't you put solar up there?"' he said.

Crawford's tract of several hundred acres sits on the east side of the Savoy land, owned by Harold "Butch" Malloy, that would house the turbines.

In an interview outside the hearing, Crawford said he questions noise studies conducted for the Minuteman project, claiming that tests of "ambient" sound, which are used to set turbine noise limits, were conducted during spring melt when streams were running noisily.

"If they care about this, they should not consider it a done deal," Crawford said outside the hearing. "I've been ignored for 10 years because I don't live in town and they can afford to ignore me."

But some Savoy residents, like Edwin R. Wilk, urged the healing to stick to the issue of turbine height.

"All I hear tonight is everything but," he said.

Malloy, who would be compensated for use of his land if the project advances, sat listening to challenges. After the hearing, he expressed confidence the turbines will go up. People who walked out in frustration over raised voices during the hearing, he said, will be back at special Town Meeting to approve the height increase.

"It will be a completely different tiling." Malloy said of that future vote. "It's 'call me when it's time to vote," he said of his allies in town. "Our supporters walked out the door early on. "

Deane-Mayer, the Palmer Capital project manager, said she wasn't surprised by the audience's questions.

"Obviously people have concerns, and they should reach out to us if they have concerns," she said.

The company can be contacted through the Minuteman Wind website, minuteman wind.com.

Among those listening was Stephen Barrett of Concord, an environmental consultant who has been a Minuteman Wind LLC principal since 2004. He said he continues to believe the project is wellsuited to Savoy.

"It's a small wind farm that fit the landscape of the surrounding area," Barrett said.

Deane-Mayer has said the project could advance even if it isn't able to increase turbine height, a request prompted by changes in available turbine equipment.

"There's no reason why this project could not move forward," he said.

If the height maximum isn't increased, though, the town will not be able to draw as much tax revenue from Minuteman Wind. By increasing the height 30 feet, the turbines, with longer blades, could produce up to 15 percent more electricity, Deane-Mayer has said.

The town and Minuteman Wind have just begun negotiations on the what tax revenues will become available to Savoy, through a payment in lieu of taxes program, or PILOT.

Nonetheless, Tynan said that if the height is increased to 455 feet, the town could receive another \$40,000 a year in tax revenues, on top of whatever agreement is reached on a PILOT for the 425-foot limit.

Tynan declined a request from one questioner to provide an estimate of the total PILOT value.

"If I give you a number it's going to stick in your head," he said. A decade ago, the estimated tax benefit to the town was \$220,000 a year - a figure both Tynan and Minuteman Wind say is no longer possible, given changes in energy markets.

The PILOT terms won't be known until Minuteman Wind finds out whether it can increase the farm's output.

"They'd have to compare the financial benefit with how they'd be affected," Barrett said of Savoy residents.

Marshall and Susan Rosenthal were making just that sort of calculation, as they waited to ask their questions.

"The taller these turbines are, the more people are going to be impacted," Susan Rosenthal said.

Reach staff writer Larry Parnass at 413-496-6214 or @larryparnass.

Marshall and Susan Rosenthal, left, wait to ask questions at Thursday's public hearing in Savoy on changes to the town's wind-power bylaw.

#### LARRY PARNASS - THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

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p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1667F8C8601D34E8>



# SAVOY - Wind back in sails of turbine project - While opposition remains, \$31M renewable energy endeavor is revived

July 10, 2017 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: LARRY PARNASS | Section: Main | 2001 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

lparnass@berkshireeagle.com

SAVOY - Bolstered by a new financial partner, a Berkshires wind turbine project proposed nearly 15 years ago may at last swing into life.

If a new timeline holds, the Minuteman Wind LLC venture would place five 425-foot turbines on a remote hill in Savoy next year.

The 12.5-megawatt project, valued at about \$31 million, won key approvals from town residents and boards in 2008 and 2010, but then underwent a long challenge on environmental grounds.

Late last year, the state Department of Environmental Protection cleared the project and the town's building commissioner issued a permit. Wasting no time, Minuteman and a new partner, the Palmer Capital Corp., worked with landowner Harold "Butch" Malloy to break ground for a turbine foundation.

And on June 30, Savoy residents voted at a special town meeting to allow the Select Board to negotiate a payment-inlieu- of-taxes plan with the developer.

Though the issue had once drawn over 200 residents to meetings, the recent town meeting was sparsely attended. The article giving the Select Board authority to handle the tax matter passed 13-5, according to Town Clerk Brenda Smith.

For Malloy, a 35-year resident of Savoy, the progress validates his 14-year effort to provide a site for a wind-power project that embraces green energy, returns tax benefits to the town and provides his family with lease income.

"One hundred years from now, if the planet lasts that long, people will wonder why we waited so long to stop using hydrocarbons," said Malloy, who is 66 and has worked a variety of energy jobs over the years, from oil fields out west to the Bear Swamp hydro facility on the Deerfield River to nuclear power plants in Rowe and Vernon, Vt.

"The best energy job I've had to date is to get this wind energy project up and running. It's for all the right reasons," he said.

Malloy acknowledged the project has been divisive in Savoy. But he believes he and the developers have addressed concerns and can minimize its impact.

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"The opponents kept coming back with all different things," he said. "We finally ironed it all out. Minuteman did everything that was asked of us."

**OPPOSITION REMAINS** 

One resident of Black Brook Road, speaking from his porch, declined to talk about the project, saying only that he had opposed it initially but now felt it was inevitable. Another resident said he is against the project but fears reprisals for speaking out against it.

Because the turbines will be close to the Hawley line, residents of that town raised questions for years and helped compel a wetlands review by the DEP. Officials in Hawley raised questions about the visual impact and effect on property values.

Trina Sternstein of Hawley spoke against the project at meetings in Savoy, believing wind turbines of this size are inappropriate in the Berkshires.

"We are all concerned about the planet, but frankly the government is pouring [money] into something that doesn't work and is terribly invasive," she said. She says the expected output of electricity from the Savoy facility isn't worth the environmental and landscape damage.

"I think they have overlooked some things in the town of Savoy," Sternstein said. "I keep hoping that someone will stop it. It will be highly destructive to us and I don't think it will be very beneficial for the people of Savoy, either."

The turbines will stand as high as those in the Hoosac Wind project in Florida and Monroe, which began operating in December 2012. But because of the terrain in east Savoy, the West Hill turbines may be visible by fewer people, based on studies conducted for the developers by Epsilon Associates Inc.

The turbines will nonetheless be seen from large sections of Savoy and Hawley as well as parts of Charlemont, Florida, Windsor and Plainfield.

"Once they get to a certain height, you're going to see them, no doubt about it," said John Tynan, chair of the Select Board.

Edwin Wick lives near the foot of Harwood Road, soon to be rebuilt to accommodate construction vehicles. He expects the sagging and weather-beaten power lines that pass his Brier Road house will be replaced so they can carry power from the turbines to the grid.

The prospect of the turbines arriving cheers him. "I want to see them because it's clean and renewable energy. It means a lot of money for the town," said Wilk, who is 85 and a good friend of Malloy, the property owner. "I just hope I live long enough to see it."

## CAPITAL ALLY

For years, it was representatives of Minuteman Wind who pitched the Savoy project. The group of eight partners, including lawyers, engineers, planners and consultants, lost three of its principals over the years.

Larry Plitch, an attorney who remains involved, referred questions to Palmer Capital. "They're really the ones driving the train right now," he said.

But he praised town leaders for sticking with Minuteman's proposal and working to shape a wind energy bylaw that won passage on a cold night in January 2008, when more than 200 townspeople crowded into the fire station to debate the issue.

That night, the bylaw that would specify conditions of a development on West Hill won the two-thirds majority it needed - and then some. The vote was nearly three-quarters in favor.

But in nearly a decade since then, as it faced other delays, some Minuteman founders dropped out. "There's only so much pain people can take," Plitch said.

Lindsay Deane-Mayer, a Palmer Capital Corp. project manager and analyst, is now leading the Savoy project. She said the company, a veteran of three similar wind projects in New England, is conducting final studies and developing a construction plan.

"Sometimes it just takes a little assistance to get over the finish line," she said of Palmer's involvement.

The company plans to order five turbines by the end of the year and take delivery in July, August or September of next year, with a goal of producing power by year's end.

Each of the turbines would be capable of generating 2.5 megawatts of electricity. In all, the installation would produce enough power to supply 2,800 to 3,750 homes, according to standards cited by the state Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Each megawatt of electricity would also offset the generation of about 2,600 tons of carbon dioxide annually, based on estimates from the office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The West Hill site sees average wind speeds of 15.6 miles per hour, according to AWS Truewinds, based on four years of local data.

Deane-Mayer said the project offers both local and global benefits, through tax payments to Savoy and the supply of green energy. The electricity would be sold to the grid. She declined to say whether the project has contracts for power sales.

But Deane-Mayer acknowledged the challenge of hauling in parts for turbines that will stand more than 40 stories tall.

"We are happy to answer questions and meet with people," Deane-Mayer said. "Wherever you live, it's going to impact you at some point."

Tynan, the Select Board leader, said Savoy's wind-power bylaw spells out conditions that protect the town's infrastructure and environment. For example, if the turbines exceed a noise level, they must be shut down and the owner called in to make repairs.

The developer must also hire an engineer to analyze how construction will affect Savoy's roads. Once building gets underway, the town and developer say they will provide regular updates on traffic and construction delays.

### TAX ISSUE

The town has hired a New Hampshire consultant to help it negotiate tax payments from Minuteman Wind.

At a meeting in 2007, Tynan said the figure of \$220,000 a year in tax payments was mentioned. But with the passage of time, and with Palmer Capital now leading the venture, talks will start anew.

Deane-Mayer said that with greater use of natural gas to produce electricity, energy prices have come down. She declined to say whether the \$220,000 figure was still a reasonable estimate.

"We're looking for stable income through the period of the permit," Tynan said of the tax agreement. "With renewable energy this is your best avenue to get something more favorable to the town."

A PILOT agreement, as it's known, can also benefit a developer by lowering initial payments, which would normally be high before depreciation reduces the value of the investment.

In similar agreements in the region, six-figure yearly payments are common. The town of Florida expected to receive more than \$250,000 when its PILOT was negotiated for the Hoosac Wind project, according the The Eagle's archive. In Hancock, a turbine installation on Brodie Mountain was to bring in \$156,000 a year, though that deal later fell into dispute.

Tynan was on the board when the issue came to a special town meeting on Jan. 3, 2008. Though sharply debated, the bylaw won more than enough votes after being amended on the floor. Minuteman Wind had already participated in six community meetings on the project.

People at the time were speaking about the importance of reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

Tynan said Minuteman has been a responsible applicant. "They've always been good to work with ... they've never been adversarial or pushy," he said.

#### SLOW TIME COMING

Malloy dates the idea of wind power on his land back to 2001, two years after he bought the 293 acres on the hilltop. He can see the ridgeline from cleared land behind his home on nearby Chapel Road.

He'd read in a newspaper article that a University of Massachusetts department wanted to find landowners interested in wind power. That group, the Renewable Energy Research Laboratory, put him in touch with Minuteman Wind LLC.

Together, they went to speak to zoning officials in Savoy, well before wind projects in Florida and Monroe got underway.

"There was some opposition, but it was out of town," Malloy said. "People from outside our borders."

Over the years, he said people occasionally asked him whether the project was dead. "We're still working on it," he said he'd told them. "We did exactly what the DEP needed us to do and what the opposition brought forward."

Malloy, who grew up in Adams, declined to say how much he stands to receive from lease payments, though that income is a factor in his decision-making.

"The purpose of this was for me to pay the taxes and make a little lease money and ease the tax burden on residents," he said, referring to PILOT payments yet to be worked out. He said he knows of long-time Savoy residents who struggle financially.

"It would be a huge help," Malloy said of new tax revenue.

He also stresses the green-energy credentials of wind power.

"It's sad to me we've taken so long to clean up our environment," Malloy said.

And he insists the project isn't something that caught people unaware.

At the outset, he said he visited with members of the Harwood family, who live closest to the project site. He says he sat on a log with them and explained what he had in mind. "If they said they didn't want it, I would have stopped right there," he said.

Before the January 2008 special town meeting, he said he and his wife Diane joined with Wilk and a member of the Harwood family to phone nearly everyone in town to remind them about the session.

At the meeting, Malloy stood to tell people that if they didn't like the idea of the project to vote it down.

"This isn't my town," he said this week. "It's our town." Reach staff writer Larry Parnass at 413-496-6214 or @larryparnass.

An excavation site for proposed wind turbines on Savoy property owned by Butch Malloy. More than a decade after it was proposed, a five-turbine project on West Hill is moving forward, with installation expected to begin in 2018. The roughly 12.5-megawatt facility would cost about \$31 million to build, according to Palmer Capital Corp.

## LARRY PARNASS - THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

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