

Critics: Spanish firm's Berkshire Gas deal points to gas export

June 23, 2015 | Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA) Author: RICHIE DAVIS Recorder Staff| Section: Home | 979 Words OpenURL Link

Among "red flags" being raised about a 20-year agreement for Berkshire Gas Co. to buy natural gas from the proposed Northeast Energy Direct pipeline is Berkshire's planned purchase by Spanish Energy giant Iberdrola.

Iberdrola, which won federal approval last month for its bid to acquire Berkshire owners UIL Holding Co., is already, through subsidiaries, the second-largest wind-turbine operator in the United States, with 5,645 megawatts of installed capacity in 18 states, including Hoosac Wind in Monroe and Florida, along with gas storage and managed capacity in North America, and serves 32 million electric and gas customers in Europe and the Americas.

The Spanish corporation, which already owns Rochester Gas and Electric Co., New York State Electric and Gas and Central Maine Power, bought UIL's Berkshire Gas, Connecticut Natural Gas and Southern Connecticut Gas in 2008 for \$4.5 billion and then in 2010 sold the companies back to UIL, which earlier this year announced the \$3 billion deal to buy back New Haven-based UIL Holdings and merge it with its New York and Maine utilities.

This week, the Department of Public Utilities is holding three days of hearing on the Berkshire Gas contract to buy gas from the proposed NED pipeline.

Pipeline opponents contend that the proposed NED pipeline, which would cross eight Franklin County towns on its way from Pennsylvania to Dracut, connecting with the Maritimes and Northeast pipeline there to feed planned export terminals to ship liquefied natural gas to foreign markets, is not needed for New England customers. Instead of lowering energy prices in the region, they argue, the pipeline would deliver the gas to demand much higher prices on the world market.

At a recent Greenfield public hearing, Rosemary Wessel of No Fracked Gas in Western Mass. told the state Department of Public Utilities — which is looking into a long-term contract for Berkshire to buy natural gas from Kinder Morgan's NED project and also must approve Iberdrola's proposed deal — that the Spanish corporation already has international customers lined up for gas that would flow from the NED pipeline.

"Iberdrola is an international gas company that has been actively preparing sources of U.S. natural gas for European markets, currently from Texas exporters, but they are looking for more to export," said Wessel, who charged that more than 75 percent of the gas flowing through the NED pipeline could be destined for export through liquefied natural gas terminals like the Pieridae project in Nova Scotia, recently approved by U.S. Department of Energy. "Making U.S. gas customers compete with global markets in which gas bills are three to five times as much is an injustice to domestic consumers," she added, calling on the DPU to investigate the implications of Berkshire Gas' takeover by Iberdrola.

UIL spokesman Michael West declined to comment on the purchase of his holding company.

But Kinder Morgan spokesman Richard Wheatley, said, "The ultimate destination of the gas is within the sole control of NED's customers. At this time, TGP has not executed any contracts with developers of proposed LNG export facilities. NED's shippers have committed to capacity to transport over 550,000 (dekatherms a day) of incremental natural gas supplies to meet New England's growing consumer and industrial gas needs, as well as to help bolster electric generation reliability. Our anchor shippers include seven New England local distribution Companies, and TGP continues to negotiate with various customers ..."

Yet Wheatley explained his company "cannot discriminate among customers based on the ultimate destination or use of the gas, such as the Northeast vs. Canada or another foreign country."

Jim Cutler of Hilltown Community Rights in Ashfield called the Iberdrola deal "the most disturbing thing" in the proposed agreement between NED and Berkshire Gas.

"I look at this set of events and the outcome, who benefits, and see that Iberdrola has worked to ensure that this pipeline is going to be installed so that they can fulfill their contracts, which already exist."

The Pieridae project would feed LNG import terminals in Spain, said Cutler, adding that Pipeline Awareness Network of the Northeast, of which he is a member, has sought full intervention status in DPU proceedings to investigate the connection, but has been rejected by the state agency.

"We all know the intervention process allows for discovery," he said. "That means that organization gets to look at the books, at the information that nobody else is privy to. It is my opinion that that discovery process is going to show conspiracy to defraud the American people, in this region, out of money that would be extracted for the construction of this pipeline. I think that's a big problem for you ... a problem that you want to stay away from as much as possible. And so you deny us ... We're not done with this. And we're going to look very deeply into this issue."

Mina Hamilton of Richmond also testified before the DPU, "Iberdrola, a multi-national corporation, has at its core totally different priorities than those of residents ... Witness Iberdrola's recent decision to spend \$5.6 billion for a 20-year contract to buy natural gas from the CorpusChristi LNG terminal in Texas — said gas to be exported to the UK and to Spain."

Hamilton said that for the DPU to OK Berkshire's agreement for NED gas and then "rubber stamp" the company's acquisition by Iberdrola "would be a shocking and outrageous betrayal of the public trust. Clearly, the true interests and priorities of Iberdrola should be the subject of full public disclosure before either the precedent agreement is signed or the buy-out of Berkshire Natural Gas is completed."

The Massachusetts Attorney General's office, which is intervening in the Iberdrola purchase case (Docket 15-26) before the DPU, testified that the deal "likely delivers substantial tangible benefits to the merging parties" shareholders, directors and senior officers but little, if any, quantifiable benefits to ratepayers."

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Workers say support of pipeline not just about jobs now, but future development (and more jobs later)

June 22, 2015 \mid Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA) Author: RICHIE DAVIS Recorder Staff \mid Section: Home \mid 617 Words OpenURL Link

For unionized construction workers around western Massachusetts, Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co.'s planned Northeast Energy Direct project could represent paydirt, and then some, say two representatives for the Holyoke-based union local representing laborers.

Even though the estimated 3,000 jobs on the project would only be about 18 months, the pipeline could lead to other gas-based industrial development that in turn would create other jobs, according to a local labor leader.

Hundreds of trade workers from around western Massachusetts build their working lives going from one project to another, say spokesmen for Holyoke-based Union 596 of Laborers International Union of North America.

"This job, if it goes through, would be one of biggest jobs in western Mass.," said Tom Andrews, business manager for LIUNAmass, who estimated that "upwards of 100 of his 500 unionized construction laborers would be part of the project, along with pipefitters, carpenters, operating engineers and other workers from other trades, would be used for construction of the 430-mile pipeline as it's built through Berkshire and Franklin counties, represented by Local 596. "This is a huge project."

But beyond the pipeline itself, Andrews and his son, LIUNA Field Organizer Colton Andrews, pointed to development activity around the region that could result from the pipeline project, which must first be reviewed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

"You can't just look at that one small picture, you have to look at the grand scheme," said Andrews. "It's going to be 20 to 25 years of expansion," beginning with additional gas lines for Berkshire Gas Co., which plans to buy gas from the Northeast Energy Direct pipeline. "Personally, I think this pipeline will lead to many, many years of economic growth and development through the expansion of the local distribution company's infrastructure and development."

Tom Andrews says providing an additional way for gas to enter the region will allow for new gas-fired electric generation plants, spurring growth by manufacturers for whom utility prices will be lowered.

The pipeline is a controversial project that drew hundreds to a public hearing in Greenfield last week, including Andrews and other union members. Andrews says they're "definitely understanding of the environmental impacts of the pipeline" and "totally sensitive" to the hardship for any residents living close to the compressor stations planned for Northfield and the Berkshire County town of Windsor.

But Andrews added, "You've got to find a balance in there. ... We're construction workers just trying to make a living."

A memorandum of understanding between TGP's parent, Kinder Morgan, and the Massachusetts Building Trade Council says Kinder Morgan and its construction contractors will use union labor at all pipeline construction sites in the state and negotiate a project labor agreement for work on the project, which is planned to cut across Ashfield, Conway, Shelburne, Deerfield, Montague, Erving, Northfield and Warwick.

Only welders, whom he said have to have special certification to work on interstate natural-gas pipelines, would have to be brought in from outside of New England, Andrews said.

Calling himself "a true believer in windmills," the North Adams resident said 15 to 20 workers from his union local — covering all of western Massachusetts northward from Holyoke to the Vermont line — were on the job at Hoosac Wind in Monroe and Florida. They're also working on the Franklin County courthouse and Baystate Franklin Medical Center expansions and Greenfield High School and on Interstate 91 bridge construction in Deerfield.

"Things are extremely busy for us right now," he said, adding that the pipeline is "going to be a great opportunity for young men and women who would love to get into the trades. ... It's not a temporary job for us. It's one job out of hopefully 20 or so in your career, and then you get to retire."

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State sets hearing on gas supply agreement with pipeline co.

May 4, 2015 | Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA) Author: Recorder Staff| Section: Home | 312 Words OpenURL Link

The state Department of Public Utilities has scheduled a May 26 public hearing on its planned "precedent agreement" for natural gas supply from Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co.'s proposed Northeast Energy Direct project.

The 2 p.m. hearing at the DPU's One South Station offices in Boston offices will be preceded by a May 22 comment deadline on the petition by Berkshire Gas, which has signed a 20-year contract for 36,000 dekatherms per day of gas from the proposed pipeline, which would cross eight Franklin County towns on its way from western Pennsylvania shale fields to Dracut, north of Lowell.

Berkshire Gas, which would contract for the gas effective Nov. 1, 2018 at three locations along the TGP system, including a proposed "gate station" near the Greenfield-West Deerfield line, says in its filing that the proposed pipeline "is the only new resource that will address all of the company's operational and reliability concerns."

The company, which also has a filing before the DPU to allow its acquisition by Hoosac Wind's Spanish-owned parent company Iberola, has a moratorium on new customers or hookups until TGP's pipeline becomes operational in the fall of 2018.

Today marks the deadline on two other TGP precedent agreements, with National Grid and Columbia Gas. A hearing on those agreements is scheduled for Thursday at 2:15 p.m. at DPU offices.

The agency, which is reviewing the proposed contracts to assure that they are in the best long-term needs of the company and its customers, has already heard comments from several Franklin County residents, and the state attorney general and Department of Energy Resources have intervened in the process.

Some of the local comments, like one from pipeline path abutter Marlene Znoy of Conway, call on the DPU to hold a public hearing on the proposal in Berkshire Gas Co.'s service territory, such as Franklin County "so that we citizens can have our say."

On the Web: bitly.com/1BCe86a bit.ly/1bsLiuW

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Hoosac Wind turbines cited for noise violations

February 10, 2015 \mid Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA) Author: DIANE BRONCACCIO Recorder Staff \mid Section: Home \mid 606 Words OpenURL Link

MONROE — After failing to meet an end-of-year deadline for fixes that would reduce the noise-level of Crum Hill wind turbines, Iberdrola Renewables LLC's Hoosac Wind Power Project has been cited by the state Department of Environmental Protection for being too loud.

Until the problems can be remedied, the company is now under an administrative consent order to take operational steps to bring the project into compliance with permissible noise levels whenever a noise complaint is found to be true through sound tests.

Last year, the DEP notified Iberdrola Renewables that the wind turbines exceeded the allowable noise level of 10 decibels above ambient noise levels. The company agreed to correct the problems by the end of the year.

But because the company didn't finish making all the recommended corrections, it was found to be out of compliance. If the company violates any terms of its Administrative Consent Order, it could face fines of up to \$1,000 per day.

The DEP order required Iberdrola to complete an "icing protocol" by Jan. 1; to review sound tests and submit more mitigation measures, if they are needed, by April 1. Iberdrola is to complete putting "trailing edge" saw-like serrations on the Crum Hill turbine blades by July 1. Also, it is to perform noise-compliance testing between October and March 2016, to see if the mitigation measures have worked.

Iberdrola spokesman Paul Copleman said the icing protocol is in place. Equipment inside the turbines detects wind direction, velocity and other factors. Copleman said the company plans on meeting all the agreement measures by their respective deadlines. He said the company made modifications to the 10 wind turbines on Bakke Mountain, in Florida. Work on all nine of the wind turbines on Crum Hill in Monroe, including installing noise-reducing serrated edges on the turbine blade, wasn't completed.

As ordered, the company has set up a 24-hour complaint hotline, monitored by an independent person who was hired for the job by the DEP, according to Copleman.

"It is one of the corrective actions we have established in partnership with the DEP. It's a new protocol enabling us to authenticate valid complaints and respond appropriately," he said.

According to the consent agreement, the independent monitor is to respond to all noise complaints as soon as is reasonably possible and conduct sound measurement tests. If the testing validates the complaint, Hoosac Wind must act to reduce the noise. If three complaints from the same location have been shown to have no merit, additional monitoring will not be necessary for that location.

Michael Farineny of the town of Florida said he has called the hotline and a respondent came to his house within 90 minutes, to sound-test the turbines. According to Farineny, the person called National Grid to shut down the turbines, to take an ambient-sound measurement, then took a second sound measurement after the turbines were turned back on. "He didn't give me any results right then," said Farineny. "He was to send in a report to DEP."

Farineny said the town of Florida hasn't sent him or other town residents any notification that they can call the hotline with complaints, so a grassroots group, calling itself "Friends of Florida and Monroe," has posted the hotline on its website:

www.hoosacwindproject.com

Farineny said he found out about the consent order and the hotline through state Rep. Gail Carriddi's office. Farineny had lived in his home for 25 years before the 340-foot wind turbines were built, with the closest turbines about 3,000 feet from his home.

You can reach Diane Broncaccio at: dbroncaccio@recorder.com or 413-772-0261, ext. 277

EDITOR'S NOTE: SOME INFORMATION IN THIS STORY HAS BEEN CHANGED FROM A PREVIOUS EDITION.

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Letters to the editor

February 9, 2015 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Section: Opinion | 1267 Words

Page: A04
OpenURL Link

Complexities of snowstorm decrees

To the editor: In response to Clarence Fanto's Feb. 1 column "Storm travel ban should be used sparingly, wisely," I applaud Governor Baker's recent attempts to create common sense by decree. Too many motorists navigate snowstorms traveling faster than prudent for the conditions on bald tires going on an errand that could be delayed a few hours.

Or perhaps it's an economic issue. Someone close to me called her employer during a significant snowstorm recently and said she thought her car wouldn't go through the heavy snow to get to her job. Despite working there for four years, the next day she was dismissed. Who wants to lose a job in that way?

- John Lyford Pittsfield

Coping with higher electricity bills

To the editor: By now, most of National Grid's customers in Massachusetts have received at least one electricity bill that is higher than last year, and customers of other utilities in Massachusetts - indeed, across New England - are seeing similar increases as well. There is no question that paying more for the same amount of electricity is frustrating. That's why we want to help you lower your bills by reducing the amount of energy you use or adopting our budget billing plan.

First, let me briefly explain the reason those bills are so much higher this year. More than half of our electricity in New England is now produced by burning natural gas as the primary fuel source. Usually this is a good thing - natural gas is an affordable, cleaner-burning fuel - but there are also a limited number of pipelines bringing natural gas into the region. So on cold days when our furnaces are working extra hard to keep us warm, there isn't enough gas available for the generators of electricity to burn. This means many generators need to switch over to an alternate fuel (like oil), making the electricity that is produced much more expensive.

National Grid doesn't generate electricity - we purchase it for you on the open market, and then pass the cost through to you without a markup. You pay what we pay. When we purchased this winter's electricity months ago, the market expected a cold winter with lots of days when gas demand would be high. This sent the price of electricity higher than ever before.

Because these electricity supply prices are out of our control, we are very concerned about what higher bills mean for our customers. There are two main ways to lower your bills this winter - the first is fairly logical and that's to use less energy! So, to encourage our customers to lower their energy use, National Grid provides financial incentives on a wide variety of energy efficient appliances, technologies and services, to not only help you save energy in the long run, but also to help you minimize the initial purchase cost of more energy efficient appliances and fixtures.

You can learn more about all available incentives at www.nationalgridus.com/EnergyEfficiencyServices.

The other way to manage your electricity bills is to get on a budget billing plan which spreads your payments out more evenly across the year. You still pay the same amount over the course of a year, but the less volatile monthly payments are helpful, especially to those on a fixed income. You can learn more about this option at www.ngrid.com/ billhelp.

As we make our way through another cold, snowy winter here in Massachusetts, electricity bills are on a lot of people's minds. We urge you to take advantage of any and all opportunities to save energy and money, because it seems that - for the next few years at least - higher winter electricity prices are here to stay. - Marcy Reed Waltham The writer is president of National Grid in Massachusetts.

K-Morgan forums are just PR exercises

To the editor: It was with a little annoyance that I read the quarter-page announcement by Tennessee Gas, a Kinder Morgan company, in the Feb. 6 Eagle of its planned "open house" in Pittsfield. I hope no one is fooled by this forum.

Representatives of this proposed project have been invited to many forums held by opposition groups in many of our towns and have not appeared at many. They apparently can't inflate their own image in the face of the facts presented by the opposition. I hope whoever goes to their open houses will also attend one of the opposition meetings also.

I was in attendance at the 350MA-Berkshire countywide forum held at the ITAM Lodge on Jan. 31. It was by far the most informative session I've attended to date. This group has some knowledgeable people who have kept informed of the pipelines being proposed. They are not afraid of answering questions and concerns from their audiences. The open house forums of TGP-Kinder Morgan are a oneon- one confrontation. Enough said!

Oh, but wait, "refreshments will be served" (the last line of their ad)! The forum I attended at the ITAM also served refreshments, but the fliers announcing it did not mention such.

I would end here, but no there's more. On the back page of the Berkshire section I became totally outraged by the half page advertisement by Kinder Morgan picturing one of the Berkshires most magnificent views. This company has no regard for our vistas. Remember, its first inklings were to devastate the breathtaking views of Deerfield and surrounding towns. It will tell you they saw the light and changed the route, but in reality it turned tail because of the opposition and legal issues raised.

So please, give both sides a chance to inform you so you can come to a truly educated opinion. In the meantime enjoy those refreshments!

- Sue Barnes Dalton

Hoosac Wind poses persistent questions

To the editor: We enjoyed the quiet in the neighborhood as the Hoosac Wind turbines were not running for a couple of days last week. We have been missing our quiet neighborhood, especially at night. Thanks to Lisa Schifilliti of Rep. Gail Cariddi's office, we finally received notice of the Administrative Consent Order (ACO) with Iberdrola for Hoosac Wind, although we also did receive something after from Clarksburg as well in the mail.

The recent complaint line for Hoosac Wind is a welcome addition for the neighbors of the project. That said, on a recent Monday just before midnight I did have cause to use it as Hoosac Wind was very noisy and we could hear the turbines in our bedroom.

The woman for the messaging service was very courteous and told me she would forward my complaint to those responsible at Iberdrola and we would be contacted. No response and while I do acknowledge a storm was forecast at that time, very little snow had occurred. No follow up or investigatory response element took place - why not?

I hope a few questions will be answered so the neighbors affected will know what is going on. What is the schedule for pure tone analysis and mitigation? Why is turbine 29 dBA being used for ambient sound in the event they perform testing but are unable to have the turbines shut down for the purpose of measuring actual background?

During testing in 2013 ambient sound was measured down to 21 LA90. Why wouldn't Iberdrola shut down the turbines for ambient sound measurements? Will all the turbines be shut down during ambient testing? In 2013, 2 turbines, T1 and T2 were not shut down during ambient testing for some reason.

For over two years our neighborhoods have been plagued with noise from the project with slight progress being achieved. The neighbors will not have fewer issues if Iberdrola is fined for being out of compliance of the Administrative Consent Order. What we need is sound sleep and not be disturbed by noise form the project.

- Larry Lorusso Clarksburg

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Letter: No checks on turbines

August 18, 2014 | Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA)

Section: Hawley 326 Words

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It's no surprise to those who are familiar with wind turbines and the companies that sell them that the Hoosac Wind turbines are out of compliance with the state's noise regulations. All over the world, people living in the vicinity of wind turbines experience the same health problems. These huge industrial machines have destroyed their peace and quiet and robbed them of sleep. The lack of candor of those promoting wind energy is remarkable. Victims often say that they were told that the turbine noise would be "no louder than the hum of their refrigerator."

There seem to be no regulations regarding what wind salesmen and proponents can say or leave unsaid about their product and some people who would not buy a new toaster without checking up on it in Consumer Reports believe what they are told by wind sales people without a blink. For example, The Recorder article says that each turbine "has the ability to produce 1.5 megawatts of electricity." This is I believe what is call "capacity." But this assumes that the turbine spins all or most of the time, which it does not do. Some wind turbines have 30 percent capacity and others less. Hoosac Wind claims that their turbines worked at 40 percent capacity in 2013. This was self-reporting and even if accurate is far below the amount advertised.

I would like to see a Consumers Report on wind turbines. It would have to report the discrepancy between the advertised wind turbine capacity and the real capacity. It would need to point out the vast amounts of fossil fuel needed to manufacture, transport, build roads for and to erect the turbines. The extraordinary tax breaks and subsidies that we are all paying for would have to be documented. The destruction of natural habitat and untold numbers of birds and bats could not go unmentioned and the marring of beautiful scenic areas would have to be included in the assessment.

TRINA SEARS STERNSTEIN

Hawley

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Hoosac Wind Project turnbines angers some - Stamford, Vt., man says he doesn't usually notice the noise

August 11, 2014 | Bennington Banner (VT)

Section: Region | 1060 Words

Page: A05 OpenURL Link

SCOTT STAFFORD

Berkshire Eagle

CLARKSBURG, Mass. - News that noise coming from the wind turbines in the Hoosac Wind project exceeded state standards has some of the project's neighbors calling for action, and others shrugging their shoulders.

"My expectation is for that project to comply with state standards," said Larry Lorusso, who lives about a mile from the project in Clarksburg. "During the day, the noise is a nuisance. But at night it's worse. At night, it goes from being a nuisance to making me really angry. And when the wind's out of the east it blows (the noise) this way."

About a mile down the road, across the border in Stamford, Vt., Peter Haviland doesn't really notice the noise much.

"When I can hear them it's sort of a gentle 'whooshing' sound, and it's very faint," Haviland said. "You have to stop and listen for it."

He said he can hear the turbines when he's outside his house, which is a little over a mile from the Hoosac Wind turbines, about 5 to 10 percent of the time. When he's inside, he can't hear them at all, even with the windows open.

"I have never, ever heard them while I was in the house," Haviland said.

Both Haviland and Lorusso said many of their neighbors are not bothered by the noise.

Responding to noise complaints, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection requested that an independent noise study be conducted, according to Edmund Coletta, spokesman for the DEP. With 19 turbines capable of generating 1.5 megawatts, Hoosac Wind started operating in Florida and Monroe in December 2012.

The 2013 noise study didn't show any violation of the state standard of 10 decibels over the ambient noise level from Hoosac Wind.

But it did show the need for another test under different weather conditions, which was conducted during January and February 2014.

Of these tests, there were three instances where the noise exceeded the 10 decibel level by as much as 7 decibels.

"That is a violation under state standards," Coletta said, noting the project's owner, Iberdrola Renewables, will "have to mitigate -- put in practice a policy that will bring (the noise level) below state standards."

On Jan. 9, at a site near Tilda Hill Road in Florida, ambient - or background - noise was 32.2 decibels. With the turbines operating the noise level was measured at 42.4 decibels, or 0.2 decibels above the state standard. On Moores Road, ambient noise was 26.7 decibels. With the turbines on, it was 37.5 decibels - or 0.8 decibels over the limit.

On Feb. 20, at the Tilda Hill Road site, ambient noise was 27.8 decibels - with turbine noise it was measured at 44.8 decibels. That is 7 decibels over the state standard.

On Moores Road, ambient noise was 27.5 decibels. Operating turbines brought that up to 44.4 decibels, 6.9 decibels over the limit.

According to information posted by the American Academy of Audiology, leaves rustle at 20 decibels, a whisper averages about 30 decibels, the noise in a quiet library averages about 40 decibels, and a normal conversation will register at 60 decibels.

In response to notification of project's exceeding the state's noise standards, Iberdrola Renewables notified the state that mitigation plans will be implemented by the end of the year.

Because the louder noise generation was caused by icing on the turbine blades, the project owner will be introducing "trailing edge serrations" on the blades to reduce the affects of icing and a new "operational protocol" during icing events.

"The Hoosac Wind Farm has a strong commitment to being a good neighbor and a partner with our community," said Paul Copleman, spokesman for Iberdrola Renewables. "In the normal course of trying to be a good neighbor we have been working closely with the Massachusetts DEP and Resource Systems Group Inc., an independent sound consultant based in Vermont, and conducting sound studies."

He said as a result of the sound studies, a plan has been implemented.

"The Hoosac Wind Farm will deploy various technologies in the coming months," Copleman said. "These include modifications to the blades of the wind turbines, implementation of a sound reduction protocol when ice is present on the blades, and a study to address any mechanical noise sources. We've shared all of these efforts with our neighbors and partners and are committing to having these initiatives completed prior to the winter of 2014."

The idea that one neighbor can hear more noise from the turbines than another neighbor nearby was addressed in an independent Health Impact Study commissioned by the DEP and issued in January 2012.

"Propagation of sound is affected by refraction of sound due to temperature gradients, reflection from hillsides, and atmospheric absorption," the study reported. "Propagation effects have been shown to lead to different experiences of noise by neighbors."

The study goes on to say that the "audible, amplitude-modulated noise from wind turbines ('whooshing') is perceived to increase in intensity at night (and sometimes becomes more of a 'thumping') due to multiple effects."

Those effects include a more stable atmosphere at night and a lower level of ambient noise "both because of the stable atmosphere and because human generated noise is often lower at night."

Coletta noted that for many homeowners neighboring a wind project, the transition from undisturbed environment to a developed power source can be difficult.

"We understand that and hope that mitigation will allow folks to reach common ground - that's what we're looking for," he said.

For Haviland, who retired from teaching language arts and history at Conte Middle School six years ago, since he hardly ever hears the turbines, the noise violation was not a big deal.

"The way the climate is changing, we have to do something," Haviland said. "And I see these turbines as the Model T. Can they get better? Yes. Will they get better? Yes. "Lorusso, a retired photographer, laments the loss of habitat due to the development of the wind project, and hopes society in general will eschew industrial wind for

more small-scale solar opportunities.

He heats his home with wood he gathers on his property and runs his diesel Mercedes with used vegetable oil when he can.

"We as individuals have to take control of our lifestyles and conserve our resources," he said.

As for reported health risks associated by some with nearby wind turbines, the Health Impact Study determined that "none of the limited epidemiological evidence reviewed suggests an association between noise from wind turbines and pain and stiffness, diabetes, high blood-pressure, tinnitus, hearing impairment, cardiovascular disease, and headache/migraine."

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• Citation (aglc Style)

'Hoosac Wind Project turnbines angers someStamford, Vt., man says he doesn't usually notice the noise', *Bennington Banner* (online), 11 Aug 2014 A05 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/14FA219D1BF689F0>



Turbine noise angers some - Others don't mind - that Hoosac Wind exceeded state noise standards

August 10, 2014 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: Scott StaffordBerkshire Eagle Staff| Section: Main| 1102 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

CLARKSBURG - News that noise coming from the wind turbines in the Hoosac Wind project exceeded state standards has some of the project's neighbors calling for action, and others shrugging their shoulders.

"My expectation is for that project to comply with state standards," said Larry Lorusso, who lives about a mile from the project in Clarksburg. "During the day, the noise is a nuisance. But at night it's worse. At night, it goes from being a nuisance to making me really angry. And when the wind's out of the east it blows (the noise) this way."

About a mile down the road,

across the border in Stamford, Vt., Peter Haviland doesn't really notice the noise much.

"When I can hear them it's sort of a gentle ' whooshing' sound, and it's very faint," Haviland said. " You have to stop and listen for it."

He said he can hear the turbines when he's outside his house, which is a little over a mile from the Hoosac Wi n d t u r b i n e s , about 5 to 10 percent of the time. When he's inside, he can't hear them at all, even with the windows open.

"I have never, ever heard them while I was in the house," Haviland said.

Both Haviland and Lorusso said many of their neighbors are not bothered by the noise.

Responding to noise complaints, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection requested that an independent noise study be conducted, according to Edmund Coletta, spokesman for the DEP. With 19 turbines capable of generating 1.5 megawatts, Hoosac Wind started operating in Florida and Monroe in December 2012.

The 2013 noise study didn't show any violation of the state standard of 10 decibels over the ambient noise level from Hoosac Wind.

But it did show the need for another test under different weather conditions, which was conducted during January and February 2014.

Of these tests, there were three instances where the noise exceeded the 10 decibel level by as much as 7 decibels.

"That is a violation under state standards," Coletta said, noting the project's owner, Iberdrola Renewables, will "have to mitigate - put in practice a policy that will bring (the noise level) below state standards."

On Jan. 9, at a site near Tilda Hill Road in Florida, ambient - or background - noise was 32.2 decibels. With the turbines operating the noise level was measured at 42.4 decibels, or 0.2 decibels above the state standard. On Moores Road, ambient noise was 26.7 decibels. With the turbines on, it was 37.5 decibels - or 0.8 decibels over the limit.

On Feb. 20, at the Tilda Hill Road site, ambient noise was 27.8 decibels - with turbine noise it was measured at 44.8 decibels. That is 7 decibels over the state standard.

On Moores Road, ambient noise was 27.5 decibels. Operating turbines brought that up to 44.4 decibels, 6.9 decibels over the limit.

According to information posted by the American Academy of Audiology, leaves rustle at 20 decibels, a whisper averages about 30 decibels, the noise in a quiet library averages about 40 decibels, and a normal conversation will register at 60 decibels.

In response to notification of project's exceeding the state's noise standards, Iberdrola Renewables notified the state that mitigation plans will be implemented by the end of the year.

Because the louder noise generation was caused by icing on the turbine blades, the project owner will be introducing "trailing edge serrations" on the blades to reduce the affects of icing and a new "operational protocol" during icing events.

"The Hoosac Wind Farm has a strong commitment to being a good neighbor and a partner with our community," said Paul Copleman, spokesman for Iberdrola Renewables. "In the normal course of trying to be a good neighbor we have been working closely with the Massachusetts DEP and Resource Systems Group Inc., an independent sound consultant based in Vermont, and conducting sound studies."

He said as a result of the sound studies, a plan has been implemented.

"The Hoosac Wind Farm will deploy various technologies in the coming months," Copleman said. "These include modifications to the blades of the wind turbines, implementation of a sound reduction protocol when ice is present on the blades, and a study to address any mechanical noise sources. We've shared all of these efforts with our neighbors and partners and are committing to having these initiatives completed prior to the winter of 2014."

The idea that one neighbor can hear more noise from the turbines than another neighbor nearby was addressed in an independent Health Impact Study commissioned by the DEP and issued in January 2012.

"Propagation of sound is affected by refraction of sound due to temperature gradients, reflection from hillsides, and atmospheric absorption," the study reported. "Propagation effects have been shown to lead to different experiences of noise by neighbors."

The study goes on to say that the "audible, amplitude-modulated noise from wind turbines ('whooshing') is perceived to increase in intensity at night (and sometimes becomes more of a 'thumping') due to multiple effects."

Those effects include a more stable atmosphere at night and a lower level of ambient noise " both because of the stable atmosphere and because human generated noise is often lower at night."

Coletta noted that for many homeowners neighboring a wind project, the transition from undisturbed environment to a developed power source can be difficult.

"We understand that and hope that mitigation will allow folks to reach common ground - that's what we're looking for," he said.

For Haviland, who retired from teaching language arts and history at Conte Middle School six years ago, since he hardly ever hears the turbines, the noise violation was not a big deal.

"The way the climate is changing, we have to do something," Haviland said. "And I see these turbines as the Model T. Can they get better? Yes. Will they get better? Yes."

Lorusso, a retired photographer, laments the loss of habitat due to the development of the wind project, and hopes society in general will eschew industrial wind for more small- scale solar opportunities.

He heats his home with wood he gathers on his property and runs his diesel Mercedes with used vegetable oil when he can.

"We as individuals have to take control of our lifestyles and conserve our resources," he said.

As for reported health risks associated by some with nearby wind turbines, the Health Impact Study determined that "none of the limited epidemiological evidence reviewed suggests an association between noise from wind turbines and pain and stiffness, diabetes, high blood-pressure, tinnitus, hearing impairment, cardiovascular disease, and headache/migraine."

To reach Scott Stafford: sstafford@berkshireeagle.com, or (413) 663-3741, ext. 227. On Twitter: @BESStafford.

Haviland

Lorusso

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Tests show higher-than-acceptable noise from Hoosac Wind turbines

August 6, 2014 | Daily Hampshire Gazette [30 Day Embargo] (Northampton, MA) Author: DIANE BRONCACCIO Recorder Staff| Section: State Region | 436 Words OpenURL Link

MONROE — Acoustic testing of the Hoosac Wind turbines in Monroe and Florida show that noise levels have exceeded the maximum decibel range permissible for the 19-turbine New England Wind facility.

Wind turbines in Massachusetts are not allowed to exceed the ambient noise level of their surroundings by more than 10 decibels. But in four measurement samples taken in January and February, acoustic engineers found higher-than-acceptable noise levels in both Monroe and Florida. The "loudest" of these tests occurred on Feb. 20, when the average turbine noise in Monroe and Florida was about 17 decibels above the general noise of surroundings, when no turbines were running. The unusual sound level was attributed to ice on the turbine blades.

The parent company, Iberdrola Renewables, has promised to take corrective measures by year's end. In a letter sent to the Western Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection office on April 28, the company says it will:

- Install saw-like edges on the blades to reduce the overall turbine sound.
- Develop a protocol to address potential turbine noise for when the blades are coated with ice.
- Hire an independent engineering service to "study the tonality in more detail." According to Catherine Skiba, a spokeswoman for the Department of Environmental Protection, that is a detailed analysis of where on the turbine the sounds are coming from.

The letter states that New England Wind will review the results with Department of Environmental Protection when the study is completed.

The testing first took place in 2013, after Department of Environmental Protection received numerous complaints from residents in Clarksburg and Florida, said Skiba. She said the agency requested tests on Tilda Hill in Monroe and on Moores Road which were performed Jan. 9 and Feb. 20.

Since the letter was written, Iberdrola Renewables has invited 60 neighbors to an information session to hear their concerns, give them copies of the sound test results and discuss the planned modifications.

Skiba said the Department of Environmental Protection has received 58 complaints since the 28.5-megawatt wind farm started operating in December 2012. Opponents of the windmills have repeatedly cited noise pollution as a concern.

Nine of the 340-foot-tall wind turbines are in Monroe and 10 are in Florida.

The sound analysis was done by RSG Inc., an independent Vermont-based company that specializes in acoustic analysis.

According to General Electric, which manufactured these turbines, the average wind-turbine sound is about 43 decibels, which is slightly louder than a refrigerator (40 decibels) but softer than an air-conditioner (50 decibels).

The ambient noise level in Florida and Monroe without running turbines, about 27 decibels, is almost at the bottom of the noise scale.

• Citation (aglc Style)

DIANE BRONCACCIO; Recorder Staff, 'Tests show higher-than-acceptable noise from Hoosac Wind turbines', *Daily Hampshire Gazette* (online), 6 Aug 2014 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/14F882312E0F2728>



Study: Monroe turbines too noisy

August 1, 2014 | Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA) Author: DIANE BRONCACCIO Recorder Staff| Section: Monroe | 460 Words OpenURL Link

MONROE — Acoustic testing of the Hoosac Wind turbines in Monroe and Florida show that noise levels have exceeded the maximum decibel range permissible for the 19-turbine New England Wind facility.

Wind turbines in Massachusetts are not allowed to exceed the ambient noise-level of their surroundings by more than 10 decibels. But in four measurement samples taken in January and February, acoustic engineers found higher-than-acceptable noise levels in both Monroe and Florida. The "loudest" of these tests occurred on Feb. 20, when the average turbine noise in Monroe and Florida was about 17 decibels above the general noise of surroundings, when no turbines were running. The unusual sound-level was attributed to ice on the turbine blades.

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- Install trailing edge serrations (saw-like edges) on the blades to reduce the overall turbine sound.
- Develop an operational protocol to address potential turbine noise for when the blades are coated with ice.
- Hire an independent engineering service to "study the tonality in more detail." According to Western Mass. DEP spokeswoman Catherine Skiba, a tonality study is a detailed analysis of where on the turbine the sounds are coming from.

The letter goes on to say that "New England Wind will review these results with DEP once the study is completed.

The testing first took place in 2013, after DEP had received numerous noise complaints from residents in Clarksburg and Florida, said Skiba. She said the DEP requested additional sites to be tested, on Tilda Hill in Monroe and on Moores Road, which were performed this year, on Jan. 9 and Feb. 20.

Since the letter was written, Iberdrola Renewables has invited 60 neighbors to an information session, to hear landowners' concerns, give them copies of the sound test results and discuss the planned modifications.

Skiba said the DEP has received 58 complaints since the 28.5-megawatt wind farm started up, in December 2012.

Nine of the 340-foot-tall wind turbines are located in Monroe and 10 are situated in Florida.

The sound analysis was done by RSG Inc, an independent Vermont-based company that specializes in acoustic analysis.

According to GE, the manufacturer of these turbines, the average wind-turbine sound is about 43 decibels, which is slightly louder than a refrigerator (40 dBs) but softer than an air-conditioner (50 dBs).

The ambient noise-level in Florida and Monroe without running turbines, about 27 dBs, is almost at the bottom of the noise scale; so a 10-decibel increase is a noticeable increase in loudness.

Opponents of the windmills have repeatedly cited noise pollution as a concern.

You can reach Diane Broncaccio at: dbroncaccio@recorder.com or 413-772-0261, ext. 277

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DIANE BRONCACCIO; Recorder Staff, 'Study: Monroe turbines too noisy', *Recorder, The* (online), 1 Aug 2014 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/14F73C680379A218



Berkshire Superior Court - Lee woman denies stealing copper

March 19, 2014 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: Andrew AmelinckxBerkshire Eagle Staff | Section: Berkshire | 618 Words Page: B03

OpenURL Link

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One of nine people allegedly involved in thefts at a wind farm pleads not guilty to 10 charges.

PITTSFIELD - One of nine people allegedly involved in the theft of copper wire from an area wind farm denied 10 charges and was released on personal recognizance.

The Massachusetts State Police allege Gina M. Arnold, 32, of Lee, was involved in the large- scale theft of specially designed copper wire from the Hoosac Wind Project atop Bakke Mountain in Florida and sold the copper in October and November to local scrap metal dealers.

The one-inch diameter wire is specially designed for a wind turbine and was valued at about \$ 38,000, according to police.

The suspects dug under a security fence surrounding the facility and cut sections of wire off two large spools, investigators said.

They were arrested after allegedly selling the copper to local scrap metal yards.

According to Assistant Berkshire District Attorney Joseph Yorlano, there were two groups of people who were involved in thefts of wire from the wind farm.

Arnold was arrested in November along with five others in a Pittsfield motel where police said they found the stripped outer covers of wire, tools used to cut the wire, and drug paraphernalia. Four others were later charged with similar crimes.

On Tuesday in Berkshire Superior Court, Arnold appeared with attorney Richard D. LeBlanc and denied multiple counts of felony receiving stolen property over \$250 and wanton destruction of property along with single counts of larceny over \$250, trespassing and being present where heroin is kept.

The Berkshire DA's Office did not ask for bail in the case and Judge John A. Agostini set bail at personal recognizance with the condition Arnold stay away from the wind farm.

She remained in custody on unrelated charges as of Tuesday afternoon and is due back to court on this case on June 19.

Dylan Greiter, 24, of Northampton, was supposed to be arraigned on similar charges Tuesday but didn't show. His lawyer, Richard S. Taskin, said his client also defaulted at a district court arraignment in North Adams and that there were questions about his living situation. He asked the court to postpone the arraignment until Thursday. If Greiter doesn't show on Thursday a warrant will be issued for his arrest.

He is facing multiple counts of receiving stolen property over \$250 and malicious destruction of property and other charges.

Six others have already been arraigned in the case.

On March 13 in Superior Court, Jamene Hinckley-Morrison, 32, of Pittsfield, denied eight charges similar to Arnold's.

Mark A. Bednarz, 47, and Tiffany Bednarz, 25, and Shelley R. Meehan, 41, all of Adams, denied charges on March 12. Mark Bednarz pleaded not guilty to five charges - four counts of receiving stolen property over \$250 and a single count of wanton destruction of property. The two women pleaded not guilty to single counts of receiving stolen property over \$250.

On March 11, Brian D. McAdoo, 35, pleaded not guilty to four charges and Eric M. Alfonso, 30, denied two charges. Both men are from Adams.

All of the defendants were released on personal recognizance.

Eli Waters, 33, of Pittsfield, is scheduled to be arraigned today on 12 charges, including multiple counts of receiving stolen property over \$ 250 and malicious destruction of property.

The investigation was conducted by state troopers assigned to the Cheshire barracks.

The wind farm built by Iberdrola Renewables puts out enough power to sustain 10,000 homes. It cost more than \$50 million to build and was heralded by Gov. Deval Patrick as part of his renewable energy initiative in Massachusetts at its December 2012 opening.

To reach Andrew Amelinckx: aamelinckx@berkshireeagle.com or (413) 496-6249.

Dow reports daily in The Eagle, except Mondays

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Letters to the Editor - Pleasant place enhanced by turbines

February 6, 2014 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Section: Main | 551 Words Page: A06 OpenURL Link

To the editor of THE EAGLE:

I write in response to a Feb. 3 letter "A happy place ruined by wind turbines." My home is located in Stamford, Vt., at the base of the northernmost wind generator of the Hoosac Wind Project. Although the letter writer lives at about the same distance away from the turbines as I do, we have vastly different experiences.

Because I spend a great deal of time out of doors gathering the wood which provides our heat as well as extensive chores, I get to hear the wind generators. Out of a typical 10day cycle I might hear them during the day for two or three of those days. I very rarely, if ever, hear them at night. The prevailing wind is out of the west, which means the sound is usually carried away from Stamford and Clarksburg.

When I do hear them, it is a gentle whooshing sound. It does not give me headaches or affect my sleep. My closest neighbors have not experienced any undue hardships, either.

And when I do hear them I am pleased that we are actually doing something about the mess our planet is in right now rather than talking about it. It is ironic that the opinion page facing the letter I write about contained a political cartoon and two columns devoted to advocating for action to be taken for reducing carbon emissions.

Wind generators are not the solution. But they are certainly part of the solution along with

Teaching team benefits child

To the editor of THE EAGLE:

In a world where it is more common to face cynicism than compassion, bureaucracy rather than transparency, it is nice to be able to acknowledge that this is not always the case. All too often we hear that schools are failing our kids, but what about recognizing teachers that are going beyond the call of duty in demonstrating true commitment to the welfare of our children?

Recently, my husband and I had a meeting with specialists in the Pittsfield Public Schools Special Education Department in partnership with educators from Pine Cobble and Williamstown Elementary School. We had asked them to review our child who was struggling with writing. The team presented us with its findings and of course, we were thrilled to learn that our child would be able to work this out easily with some additional support.

But this was just one reason for our joy. The other was the thoughtful attention and comprehensive examination given to our child by the most professional and compassionate group of teachers we have ever experienced. The focus was our child, plain and simple; the group worked as a well-oiled machine to find the best outcome for him.

Like some say to those who enlist in the army, to these teachers, we say "Thank you for your service!" LAURA THOMPSON ROGER THOMPSON Pittsfield other forms of alternative energy. Wind, solar, and hydropower are not perfect technologies but we need to keep developing them to improve their contribution. We need to do all we can to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

I spoke with a business person in Clarksburg and asked her how her customers felt about the wind generators. She told me that the older the person the more likely their response would be negative. Change is difficult, but we can

meet the challenge by working together. PETER HAVILAND Stamford, Vt.

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'Letters to the EditorPleasant place enhanced by turbines', *Berkshire Eagle, The* (online), 6 Feb 2014 A06 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/14BCE76BAE610FE8



Letters

February 4, 2014 | Bennington Banner (VT) Section: Editorial | 530 Words Page: A04 OpenURL Link

'Neighbors from hell'

I live in Clarksburg, Mass. at the base of Hoosac Ridge below the location of 10 of the 19 wind turbines of Hoosac Wind. I have been exploring Hoosac Ridge as a neighbor for some years and enjoyed the scenic opportunities, as well as solitude on trips out back. At first, based on information from the developer Iberdrola, we thought the project was a good idea, but the information was not accurate and we soon learned about the realities of living near an industrial wind project.

Because our home is in another town we had no say about the project. When construction began we could hear the noise, many times beginning at 7 a.m. and continuing throughout the day until evening. I watched as what I called the "Enchanted Forest" disappeared. Thousands of trees were cut, swamps and wetlands obliterated, and blasting transformed the Ridge, a beautiful, largely untouched wild area teeming with wildlife reduced to a strip of crushed rock.

One of the reasons many of us chose to live here is to enjoy the peace and quiet our rural neighborhoods provide. When the construction phase of Hoosac Wind was completed our quiet rural neighborhood was transformed. The neighbors were told we wouldn't hear the turbines and any sound would be the same as a refrigerator. Then Hoosac Wind started generating electricity. The reality is the noise can be loud enough to wake us and make sleep impossible in our bedroom, one mile away from the turbines. Sometimes it's noisy for several nights in a row, and that does take a toll. We slept with the windows closed this summer because of the noise and the first 2 days of 2014 had me sleepless in Clarksburg. Now I often get up in the morning and don't feel refreshed and rested. Our home and property is no longer the refuge from the rigors of modern life as it used to be. A place where we could sit outside and the noises of civilization were few and fleeting and at night be so quiet. That has been replaced by the noise of an industrial power plant thumping and roaring with a rhythm in a most unnatural way that can be difficult and at times impossible to ignore at all hours of the day or night.

After a year with Hoosac Wind have come to know it as the "Neighbors from Hell." We have been told there is no evidence of noise and therefore we don't seem to have any recourse except to suck it up or move. Those ideas sadden me as this is our home. We have invested ourselves in this place and hope to spend the rest of our days living here. We, the neighbors, are the people impacted in many ways by such projects and the ones who help make these communities what they are. Being here talking about why we should have a say in such things strikes me as strange, as there should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the people who live in neighborhoods with proposals for these projects MUST have a voice in things that can affect their homes and properties so profoundly. Anything less has no place in a Democracy, in my opinion.

LARRY LORUSSO Clarksburg, Mass.

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'Letters', *Bennington Banner* (online), 4 Feb 2014 A04 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/14BC2F2E66723960>



Regional planners criticize attempt by state Department of Public Utilities to guide siting of wind turbines

February 4, 2014 \mid Daily Hampshire Gazette [30 Day Embargo] (Northampton, MA) Author: RICHIE DAVIS Recorder Staff \mid Section: State Region \mid 758 Words OpenURL Link

The blades of wind-power generation are turning again, raising concerns of residents opposed to having windmills dot the landscape, and also those of regional planners criticizing an effort by the state Department of Public Utilities to issue siting "guidance" to communities and developers.

The executive committee of the Franklin Regional Planning Board is drafting a letter to the DPU critical of the agency's move to develop "best practices" for wind power siting. The proposed letter by the board, as well as the executive board of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, follows comments already made by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

The Berkshire planning board filed comments in November stating, "We are puzzled as to why the DPU is taking the lead in the development of wind energy facility guidelines, as this agency does not have jurisdiction over the siting of energy generating facilities that generate less than 100 MW and thus is very unlikely to oversee the permitting of any land-based wind energy projects in the state. Furthermore, BRPC opposes any reduction in the 100-MW permitting threshold for DPU as a means of circumventing local control over renewable energy generation projects."

The deadline on comments about the DPU's proposal will expire Thursday. It also drew criticism at a public hearing in Pittsfield that attracted nearly 100 residents — including some from Franklin County — criticizing the agency's move as a backhanded way of getting around the controversial issue of land-based wind turbine siting and insisting that local control not be circumvented.

Hearings were also held in Gardner, Hyannis, Gloucester and Boston.

Meanwhile, siting legislation has been refiled by state Rep. Frank Smizik, D-Brookline, and state Sen. Barry Finegold, D-Andover, to institute comprehensive siting reform for land-based wind projects. The bills had hearings in December before the Joint Committee of Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy. Residents who live near turbines accused renewable energy advocates of persistently pushing legislation to make it easier to permit land-based wind energy projects without acknowledging health effects. Environmentalists argued benefits of the renewable energy outweigh some of the negative impacts.

Similar legislation made it through the House in 2010, but the Senate failed to finish work on the bill. Senators in favor of it attempted to get it passed during informal sessions, but it was repeatedly blocked by opponents that summer. Supporters of that bill, including the Patrick administration, said it would have helped expedite wind-based turbine projects while preserving the ability of municipalities to reject unwanted projects.

Lloyd Crawford of Hawley, who attended last week's 31/2-hour DPU hearing in Pittsfield, said, "There's been a widespread sentiment that as a result of the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act failing to get through the Legislature, the Patrick administration is looking at alternate ways to take control of the siting of wind turbines. It's hard to know whether that would actually come to pass; they say it won't. But I think that everybody in that room was suspicious of what the agenda was here."

An aide to Sen. Benjamin Downing, D-Pittsfield, who co-chairs the Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee, said he is opposed to the legislation that has been filed.

A key deficiency cited in 2010 legislation was that it lacked clear standards for projects that should be sited in the state. Franklin Regional Planning Director Margaret "Peggy" Sloan said the DPU filing does not have the breadth of

composition that's needed to develop credible standards. While its proposed "wind working group" that would set standards for municipalities, developers and others would include a variety of state agencies, it has no representation from towns, from the Massachusetts Municipal Association or regional planning agencies, Sloan says.

"The administration was wanting to pass the legislation before anyone knew what the siting standards were," Sloan told the planning board last week. "The planning board went on record a number of times saying, 'Before you ask our legislators to pass this legislation, you should tell us what the siting standards are."

Sloan called the DPU's initiative "puzzling," since its jurisdiction is for projects of more than 100 megawatts, while most land-based wind projects are "significantly smaller" than that. The 19-turbine Hoosac Wind project in Monroe and Florida, the third largest in the state, totals only 28.5 megawatts.

A Franklin County letter, which the executive committees plan to draft next week, would likely agree with the Berkshire letter in opposing any reduction in the DPU's 100-megawatt threshold and also call for siting standards to be developed by a broader coalition that represents the diverse interests and scientific evidence that should be considered when siting land-based wind projects.

On the Web: http://bit.ly/1n1zSxe .

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Wind power - Regional planners resist state utility regulators' attempt to control turbine siting

February 3, 2014 \mid Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA) Author: RICHIE DAVIS Recorder Staff Section: Home \mid 823 Words OpenURL Link

The blades of wind-power generation are turning again, raising concerns of residents opposed to having windmills dot the landscape, and also those of regional planners criticizing an effort by the state Department of Public Utilities to issue siting "guidance" to communities and developers.

The Franklin Regional Planning Board's Executive Committee is drafting a letter to the DPU critical of the agency's move to develop "best practices" for wind power siting. The proposed letter by the board, as well as the Franklin Regional Council of Government's Executive Board, follows comments already made by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

The Berkshire planning board filed comments in November saying, "We are puzzled as to why the DPU is taking the lead in the development of wind energy facility guidelines, as this agency does not have jurisdiction over the siting of energy generating facilities that generate less than 100 MW and thus is very unlikely to oversee the permitting of any land-based wind energy projects in the state. Furthermore, BRPC opposes any reduction in the 100 MW permitting threshold for DPU as a means of circumventing local control over renewable energy generation projects."

The DPU's proposal, for which the deadline on comments will expire Thursday, also drew criticism at a public hearing in Pittsfield that attracted nearly 100 residents — including some from Franklin County — criticizing the agency's move as a backhanded way of getting around the controversial issue of land-based wind turbine siting and insisting that local control not be abrogated or circumvented.

Hearings were also held in Gardner, Hyannis, Gloucester and Boston.

Meanwhile, siting legislation has been re-filed by Rep. Frank Smizik, D-Brookline, and Sen. Barry Finegold, D-Andover, to institute comprehensive siting reform for land-based wind projects. The bills had hearings in December before the Joint Committee of Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy. Residents who live near turbines accused renewable energy advocates of persistently pushing legislation to make it easier to permit land-based wind energy projects without acknowledging health effects. Environmentalists argued benefits of the renewable energy outweigh some of the negative impacts.

Similar legislation made it all the way through the House in 2010, but the Senate failed to finish work on the bill. Senators in favor of it attempted to get it passed during informal sessions, but it was repeatedly blocked by opponents during that summer. Supporters of that bill, including the Patrick administration, said it would have helped expedite wind-based turbine projects while preserving the ability of municipalities to reject unwanted projects.

Lloyd Crawford of Hawley, who attended last week's 3 1 / 2-hour DPU hearing in Pittsfield, told The Recorder, "There's been a widespread sentiment that as a result of the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act failing to get through the Legislature, the Patrick administration is looking at alternate ways to take control of the siting of wind turbines. It's hard to know whether that would actually come to pass; they say it won't. But I think that everybody in that room was suspicious of what the agenda was here."

An aide to Sen. Benjamin Downing, D-Pittsfield, who co-chairs the Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy Committee, said he is opposed to the legislation that has been filed.

A key deficiency cited in 2010 legislation was that it lacked clear standards for projects that should be sited in the state. Franklin Regional Planning Director Margaret "Peggy" Sloan said the DPU filing doesn't have the breadth of

composition that's needed to develop credible standards. While its proposed "wind working group" that would set standards for municipalities, developers and others would include a variety of state agencies, it has no representation from towns, from the Massachusetts Municipal Association or regional planning agencies, Sloan says.

"The administration was wanting to pass the legislation before anyone knew what the siting standards were," Sloan told the planning board last week. "The planning board went on record a number of times saying, 'Before you ask our legislators to pass this legislation, you should tell us what the siting standards are."

What's needed are science-based standards set by "a broad-based group" that would look at a variety of issues in the same way as comprehensive state-sponsored 2010 biomass study by Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences. That's what would help local officials when they are confronted by the possibility of a large-scale wind project.

Sloan called the DPU's initiative on this subject "puzzling," since its jurisdiction is for projects of more than 100 megawatts, while most land-based wind projects are "significantly smaller" than that. The 19-turbine Hoosac Wind project in Monroe and Florida, the third largest in the state, totals only 28.5 megawatts.

A Franklin County letter, which the executive committees plan to draft next week, would likely agree with the Berkshire letter in opposing any lessening of DPU's 100-megawatt threshold and also call for siting standards to be developed by a broader coalition that represents the diverse interests and scientific evidence that should be considered when siting land-based wind projects

On the Web:

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Wind projects generate fear

January 28, 2014 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: Dick LindsayBerkshire Eagle Staff| Section: Berkshire | 511 Words Page: B01

OpenURL Link

PITTSFIELD - Gov. Deval L. Patrick can't be trusted to protect Western Massachusetts from unwanted, harmful commercial wind farms threatening the health and beauty of the region.

Dozens of Berkshire-area residents delivered that message Monday evening to state energy regulators gathering public input at Berkshire Community College on the best practices for siting land-based wind turbine projects across the commonwealth.

Later this spring, the state Department of Public Utilities plans to draft guidelines that won't supersede existing local and state siting regulations, according to DPU officials.

"The department is not developing enforceable measures, but a guide to assist permitting authorities," said James Buckley, attorney for the DPU Siting Division However, the majority of the nearly 100 people attending the public hearing didn't believe Buckley's statement, claiming the pending guidelines are a ruse to resurrect the Wind Energy Siting Reform Act (WESRA) rejected by the state Legislature.

"The Patrick administration has earned our mistrust and fear," said Eleanor Tillinghast of Green Berkshires. "The governor has used one tactic or another to push wind energy in our communities."

"[WESRA] is zombie legislation that keeps stalking our communities," added Cynthia Wick of Lenox. Opponents to commercial wind energy facilities during the well over three-hour public hearing cited how the state and wind farm developers have ignored the environmental, economic and health impact of wind turbines. The most compelling testimony came from several people who live near the Hoosac Wind project in the town of Florida. The 19 turbines went on line in December 2012, and a month later town residents Nancy Shea and her husband Tim Danyliw moved out of their home.

Shea says they could no longer handle the noise and ill feeling, living 2,200 feet away from the closest turbine.

"It felt like the room was spin-

ning," she said. "It sounds like a jet engine over the house that doesn't go away."

Another neighbor to Hoosac Wind, Michael Fairneny, also feels the project has robbed his quality of life in the rural community.

"My happiness was taken away from my own home," he said. "It's like living next to an airport an [the planes] never land."

In Peru, where a proposed wind energy project has polarized the town, some residents fear they will have a Hoosac Wind of their own.

"We care deeply about our property values, health and natural beauty," said Bonnie DiTomasso.

Wind farm detractors also say the alternative energy source won't impact the state's plan to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

In 2009, the Patrick administration called for 2,000 megawatts of wind capacity by 2020, 25 percent produced by onshore wind turbines. The goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 3.1 million tons from electricity produced by oil and natural gas.

Several speakers cited how wind energy has failed to meet the energy needs of Germany, Spain, parts of Canada, producing electricity well below projections.

Wind power just isn't worth the hassle, according to Ellen Landauer of nearby Charlemont in Franklin County.

" Decommission all the wind turbines in the state, take them down and ban them forever," she said. (c) 2014 The Berkshire Eagle. All rights reserved. Reproduced with the permission of Media NewsGroup

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Dick LindsayBerkshire Eagle Staff, 'Wind projects generate fear', *Berkshire Eagle, The* (online), 28 Jan 2014 B01 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/14B9D9B8CA817400



Noise, property values highlight wind forum

January 24, 2014 | Bennington Banner (VT) Section: The Manchester Journal | 1185 Words Page: F01 OpenURL Link

Brandon Canevari

Staff writer

GRAFTON - About 60 people gathered at the White Church in Grafton for the second in a series of three wind forums, this one focusing largely on the depreciation of the value of properties located near wind projects.

The first forum - which was held last November at the United Church of Christ in Townshend - focused largely on the noise impacts wind projects have had in some nearby areas. One of those was the 19 turbine Hoosac wind project in the town of Florida, Vt. built by Iberdrola Renewables - a company headquartered in Spain - and another was the 24 turbine project built by Iberdrola in Groton, N. H.

Iberdrola Renewables built two test towers (MET towers) in Windham and one in Grafton on land owned by the New Hampshire based Meadowsend Timberlands Limited, which some believe is a precursor to an application for a large scale wind development project in Windham County.

According to a Power Point presentation put together by Mike McCann the owner of Mc-Cann Appraisal, LLC, there are 951 dwellings within three miles of the potential tower sites - 500 of which are within 2 miles of the potential site - in the towns of

WIND from 1A A ndover, Athens, Chester, Grafton, Jamaica, Londonderry, Townshend and Windham.

The town of Windham would be impacted the most with 414 dwellings located near the potential site as well as the towns of Londonderry, Grafton and Townshend, which have 199, 146, and 114 dwellings, respectively, within 3 miles of the site.

During the forum on Friday night, there was the sense that the perhaps a big part of the reason the value of homes near wind projects declined was due to the noise associated with them as it made it difficult to draw interest from perspective buyers.

In a study McCann did on Lee County, III., the average price per square foot for a home outside 2 miles of the wind project was \$104.72. For those that were within 2 miles of the project the average sale price was \$78.84 per square foot - a decline in value of approximately 25 percent.

The correlation between wind farms leading to significant depreciation of property values is not universally accepted however. In the article "No Evidence of Residential Property Value Impacts Near U.S. Wind Turbines, a New Berkley Lab Study Finds," published on http://newscenter.lbl.gov on Aug. 27, 2013, Allen Chen stated that more than 50,000 home sales near 67 wind facilities in 27 counties in nine U.S. states did not reveal any impacts to nearby home property values.

In the article "Property Values? Evidence is that if wind farms do impact them it's positively" published on barnardwind.com on Feb. 19, 2013, Mike Barnard states that eight major and statistically reliable studies covering over 260,000 property transactions by different and respected organizations in various countries over the duration of 15 years have found no correlation between operating wind turbines and negative property values.

Still, one couple that was part of a panel at Friday's forum - Scott and Melodie McLane from Georgia, Vt. - experienced the depreciation of the value their home first hand. After the Georgia Wind project was built, the couple began to be affected by the noise, which was the same complaint the panelists from the first forum - who lived near the Hoosac Wind Project and the Groton Wind Project - made.

"We get the noise. That's our biggest issue," said Melodie Mc-Clane.

The McClanes - who live 3,800 feet from the project - filed an appeal on July 1 of last year to the Board of Civil Authority to have their home reappraised. After the hearings, the McClanes were notified on Oct. 4 that their appeal had been granted.

"The committee felt there was a noise factor to the property caused by Georgia Wind Project and decided to use the scale of (8 percent to 15 percent of value) of impact provided by the Assessor based upon the noise level," the official notice from the BCA said. "The committee recommended the property-assessed value by the town be reduced by 12 percent." Before the appeal the McClanes' home was worth \$409,000; after the appeal it was worth \$360,712.

Lisa Wright Garcia of Wright appraisal Company in West Rutland - who was also the other panelist and helped the Mc-Clanes in their appeal process - felt the BCA took the appropriate action.

"The BCA is not tax professionals so it's meant to be kind of a check on the process and I have to congratulate the BCA in their town because I think they really did the right thing by the fellow taxpayers and sadly I don't find that tax appeals always go that way," Wright Garcia said.

There were six people on the committee, all of whom Melodie McClane came up to their house and spent a significant amount of time listening to the noise to try to make a determination in the case.

"With the noise, it's not noisy all the time," Melodie McClane said. "We can go two days with no noise whatsoever and then bam - you're getting hammered; rumble, rumble, rumble, rumble all day long all night long." Scott McClane - who is an engineer - said that he has certified sound metering equipment and he has excel graphs that show pre- and post-construction noise I evels. Scott McClane said that the developer was close to breaking the 10 decibels increase in the ambient noise levels.

"Even at that higher level the p roject, per the conditions of t heir certificate of public good, was still in compliance, but that doesn't mean that it hasn't depreciated our property," said Scott McClane. "That's the whole thing. The wind developers will sit back and go 'Hey, we're in compliance' ... and that's the thing that people have to understand. It's taken something away from us."

Melodie McCann said that the longer they hear the noise from the turbines the worse it feels.

Near the end of the forum, Executive Director of Vermont for Clean Energy and moderator of t he forum, Annette Smith, rec ounted the experiences of Steven and Luann Therrien who live near the Sheffield Wind project. They had lived in their home - which Smith said is not far from the Interstate - for 17 years. However, since the turbines have been built they begun experiencing physical symptoms.

"That turbine noise and the infrasound has made them so sick they can't work. They're on antidepressants. They're on sleeping medications. Steve is on motion sickness pills. He often wakes up in the morning throwing up," said Smith.

The Therriens have sought help from the town of Sheffield, First WInd - the developer - and several other entities so that they can abandon their home and find a better place to live, Smith said - so far to no avail.

During closing statements, Melodie McClane gave one parting thought to the crowd.

"The best thing you can do up front is the thing that you're doing now ... just learning about the whole process and if they do actually go through the permitting process to put this project in, be an intervener. Hire an attorney," she said. According to Smith, a representative from Iberdrola was at the forum on Friday, but she did not identify herself or ask any questions.

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Grafton wind forum covers home values

January 21, 2014 | Brattleboro Reformer (VT) Section: Main | 1041 Words Page: 01

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By BRANDON CANEVARI

Manchester Journal

GRAFTON - About 60 people gathered at the White Church in Grafton for the second in a series of three wind forums, this one focusing largely on the value of properties located near wind projects.

The first forum - which was held last November at the United Church of Christ in Townshend - focused largely on the noise impacts wind projects have had in some nearby areas. One of those was the 19 turbine Hoosac wind project in the town of Florida, built by Iberdrola Renewables - a company headquartered in Spain - and another was the 24 turbine project built by Iberdrola in Groton, N.H.

Iberdrola Renewables built two test towers in Windham and one in Grafton on land owned by the New Hampshire based Meadowsend Timberlands Limited, which some believe is a precursor to an application for a large scale wind development project in Windham County.

According to a Power Point presentation put together by Mike McCann the owner of McCann Appraisal, LLC, there are 951 dwellings within three miles of the potential tower sites - 500 of which are within two miles of the potential site - in the towns of Andover, Athens, Chester, Grafton, Jamaica, Londonderry, Townshend and Windham.

Windham would be affected the most with 414 dwellings located near the potential site as well as the towns of Londonderry, Grafton and Townshend, which have 199, 146, and 114 dwellings, respectively, within three miles of the site.

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County, Ill., the average price per square foot for a home outside two miles of the wind project was \$104.72. For those that were within two miles of the project the average sale price was \$78.84 per square foot - a decline in value of approximately 25 percent.

One couple that was part of a panel at Friday's forum - Scott and Melodie McLane from Georgia - experienced the depreciation of the value their home first hand. After the Georgia Wind project was built, the couple began to be affected by the noise, which was the same complaint the panelists from the first forum - who lived near the Hoosac Wind Project and the Groton Wind Project - made.

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Brandon Canevari is a staff writer for the Manchester Journal. Follow him on Twitter @BrandonCanevari.

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Noise, property values factor in wind forum discussion

January 20, 2014 | Manchester Journal (VT) Author: Brandon Canevari - Staff Writer | Section: News | 1033 Words OpenURL Link

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Lenox - No bail for man in copper theft case - Bail revoked from similar earlier charge

December 3, 2013 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: Clarence FantoSpecial to The Eagle | Section: Main | 488 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

LENOX - A Lenox man accused of trying to steal copper piping on Thanksgiving night is being held for up to 60 days without the right to bail because of an open case - which also involved the theft of copper.

Steven M. Winters, 30, of the Berkshire Mobile Home Park at 405 Pittsfield Road, allegedly was caught in the act of trying to steal piping from a vacant home last Thursday, according to Lenox Police

Chief Stephen O'Brien.

He was ordered held on \$5,000 cash bail over the holiday weekend following his arraignment on Friday in Central Berkshire District Court. But during a pretrial hearing on Monday in Southern Berkshire District Court, Judge Philip Beattie revoked bail set on a September charge of receiving stolen property worth over \$250.

In that case, Winters was charged in connection with the theft of copper piping from the roof of the vacant former Price Chopper store at the Center in Lenox, which now houses a new Price Chopper and other businesses.

On Thanksgiving night, Lenox officers Sean Ward and William Fuore, along with the Lee police K- 9 unit headed by officer Craig DeSantis, responded at about 9 p.m. to reports that a break-in was in progress at a vacant house behind the Knights Inn on Pittsfield Road (Routes 7 & 20), O'Brien said.

Upon arriving, they found fresh footprints in the snow and a section of plywood had been removed that had secured the basement door. Upon entering the building, the officers confronted and then arrestedWinters, O'Brien said.

Two sections of copper piping had been removed from the cellar's ceiling, according to the police report.

Winters was booked at the Lenox police station, where he remained until his arraignment on Friday at Central Berkshire District Court, where \$5,000 cash bail was set on three felony charges - breaking and entering in the nighttime with the intent to commit a felony, larceny from a building, and possession of burglary tools.

Winters was held at the Berkshire County Jail & House of Correction over the weekend and was returned there on Monday following his court date in Great Barrington.

Thefts of copper piping or wiring have become frequent in vacant buildings and on sites of new construction, the police chief noted.

The value of copper has soared in recent years, from 60 cents a pound in 2002 to \$3.60 a pound on Monday at the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Last month, six suspects were arrested by Massachusetts State Police on charges of stealing \$38,000 worth of copper wire from the Hoosac Wind Project atop Bakke Mountain in the town of Florida. Three were from Pittsfield, two from Adams and one from Northampton.

State police investigators from the Cheshire barracks said the suspects dug under a security fence surrounding the wind farm facility and cut sections off two large spools of wire. They then allegedly tried to sell the copper wire to local scrap metal yards.

To contact Clarence Fanto: cfanto@yahoo.com or (413) 637-2551. On Twitter: @BEcfanto

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