

DIANE BRONCACCIO Recorder Staff *10/29/2010 HEATH -- It's not unusual to see a gubernatorial re-election candidate "pounding the pavement" for last-minute voters five days before an election.

October 29, 2010 | Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA) 913 Words
OpenURL Link

But to see him in a town of so little pavement and so few people was remarkable to the crowd of 150 or so who came to Heath Elementary School Thursday afternoon for Gov. Deval Patrick's visit to this hilltown of about 800 souls.

First, the schoolchildren met with Patrick, asking him questions and presenting him with a few gifts: a school sweatshirt, homemade butternut squash soup made with squash grown by the children in the school's "Three-Sister Garden," and a recipe for the soup.

Patrick hardly had to campaign in the all-school meeting: When Superintendent Michael Buoniconti asked the children "What's going to happen on Tuesday," a child raised his hand and said, "The governor's going to be reelected."

Patrick gave the boy a nod of approval, and the audience laughed and applauded.

"People will decide if the governor should be elected for another four years," Buoniconti gently corrected.

A second-grader, who said he was concerned about the ocean, asked: "how are the oceans doing?"

Patrick said the state is among the first to develop a state ocean plan, established by the Oceans Act of 2008. He said the ocean management plan calls for mapping out portions of the Massachusetts coast that are best suited for recreational use, commerce, fishing and energy production. The goal is to protect critical environmental resources while setting standards for wind-energy turbines, fishing and other activities. "The plan is nearly done," he said. "It's very interactive, and this is one of the first places to do this."

A sixth-grader asked Patrick, "Why did you want to run for governor in the first place?"

Patrick said he had enjoyed serving as head of the civil rights division during President Bill Clinton's administration. "I wanted to run for governor because I felt we hadn't been governing well for a long time. I felt we weren't making the kinds of investments for a better life for you and for your children."

When asked what he likes to do for fun, Patrick said: "This is fun. I like to garden. I REALLY like to garden. I have a wonderful family, and two dogs; I like to spend time in our family's house in the Berkshires. I really like to read, too."

The questions from the adults in the school gymnasium were more challenging, although the atmosphere was just as welcoming.

The questions ranged from concerns about the future of health care to worries that the state's proposed windenergy facility siting reform law would take local control out of the equation, when it comes to siting wind turbines in a community.

Glass artist Bob Dane of Heath, who also has a gift gallery in Nantucket, pointed out that people who were supportive initially of wind-energy on Cape Cod have been disappointed by noise problems there.

Patrick said he believes there would still be avenues for wind-turbine siting appeals but "not an unlimited appeals process." He pointed out that both Monroe and Florida have been in support of the Hoosac Wind Project, yet it's been held up for at least seven years by various opponent groups.

"Hoosac has been tied up for years -- in communities that say they want it," Patrick said. "What we have today are limitless appeals."

Heath Highway Superintendent Michael Smith asked if more money will be in the pipeline for Chapter 90 highway funds

Patrick replied that the available money has been due to passage of the Transportation Bond bill, but that increased funding to towns are unlikely for at least the next three years.

Pam Porter, a Heath resident who now works with the Franklin County Home Care Corp., spoke of the need for more support for programs that help elders to continue living at home -- especially in rural areas where there are fewer services for elders. Patrick agreed, noting that "this is the first time we've spent more Medicare money on home care," rather than on institutional care.

Susie Patlove of Charlemont asked if Green Party candidate Jill Stein's entry into the gubernatorial race was making the election race tighter. She also asked if Patrick would support single-payer health care.

Patrick said he believes the race is unusually close because of "millions of corporate dollars" flowing into the state as election contributions by "donors who cannot be identified."

On the health-care issue, Patrick said, "I'm not sure single-payer is possible, state by state, because of the presence of Medicare. He pointed out that he stood up for health care rights by capping health insurance rates this spring.

Many of Patrick's aides were unable to work their cell phones during the Heath visit, and Patrick later told the audience he hopes places like Heath will have high-speed broadband service available within the next two years.

Patrick proudly pointed out that this was his second visit to the Heath school.

Four years ago, as a first-time candidate, Patrick said he met Art Schwenger of Heath at a Franklin County Democratic picnic. "Art said, If you want to see a part of Massachusetts that gets overlooked, you should come to Heath.'"

Patrick said his campaign managers told him he was not going to Heath "because there aren't enough people there."

But following handwritten signs that guided him to the school, Patrick arrived at the Heath school on a summer day, where a couple hundred people were waiting to meet him.

"I will never forget that day," he said. "The welcome was so warm and friendly, I was swept away."

"I wanted to come back to remind you that I have never forgotten you as I govern Massachusetts. I have felt your presence as central to my work."

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Tillinghast to speak on wind power today

October 26, 2010 \mid North Adams Transcript (MA)

Section: News | 104 Words

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PITTSFIELD - A prominent opponent of industrial wind power will speak at a special Berkshire Community College forum today at 12:15 p.m. in K-111, the college's small theater.

Eleanor Tillinghast, president of Green Berkshires Inc., will present a talk and slide show on "The wind power controversy and what it means for the Berkshires." The program is free and open to the public. It is co-sponsored by the college's Green Team.

Tillinghast led the citizens' lobby that stalled passage of the controversial Wind Siting Reform Act earlier this year and was a key opponent of the Hoosac Wind project in the towns of Florida and Monroe.

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'Tillinghast to speak on wind power today', *North Adams Transcript* (online), 26 Oct 2010 A03 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1331AA0E6A6DB5A8



Facing the wind - Virtually all forms of energy are subsidized.

September 27, 2010 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Section: Main | 601 Words Page: A05 OpenURL Link

WILLIAMSTOWN

The newspapers, radio, television and especially the Internet are full of malaise relating to wind power, some of it accurate and some of it not. With the turbines in Searsburg, Vt., still spinning (well, 10 of the original 11), the largest wind energy farm in New England approaching construction in Readsboro and Searsburg, Hoosac Wind about to blow in Florida and Monroe, the Brodie project in New Ashford apparently unstuck, Zephyr at Jiminy Peak and a small tower visible from Route 7 in Pownal, it is time not to spit into, but face the wind.

Let's consider the situation in what I intend to be a nonpartisan way. Wind developers may have some altruistic motives about weaning the country from dirty forms of energy, like coal and oil, but primarily they are out to make money. That is called capitalism, the economic system on which our country runs. We can't expect wind developers to be otherwise motivated.

Wind development has the potential to be profitable for two reasons at present: government subsidies and free fuel. Although some parts of this country and the world are way ahead of New England, wind energy in general is in a startup phase. It just costs too much to put up the towers without the subsidies. Virtually all forms of energy are subsidized, by the way, from nuclear (in which case it remains the government's responsibility to figure out how to get rid of the waste) to oil (involving the U.S. Army and Navy for supplies abroad and shipping). And subsidies have encouraged many startups over the years.

The subsidies and government pressure on utilities to find renewable energy are based on the idea that wind is an alternative to the carbon-based fuels that are creating climate change, that wind does not have to be purchased from abroad nor shipped nor piped nor dug from the ground at great risk to the diggers, and that the development of wind energy creates jobs. As more wind turbines are mounted, costs should decrease, allowing the subsidies to be phased out.

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Central Vermont Public Service recently announced it would purchase two-thirds of the Deerfield output. That project is, in part, in the Green Mountain National Forest, which might be considered another form of subsidy, although the developer will be paying Searsburg and Readsboro for its use of their land in the forest.

Because of the uncertainties of relying on wind, practically speaking most wind turbines only produce between 20 and 30 percent of their capacity. Searsburg, for example, says it produces 27 percent of capacity. So we need to divide the megawatts of capacity by, say, 25 percent, to get the real production, although as the industry develops, we can assume that number will rise due to greater efficiency.

The figures given for the number of households for which power is provided are actual, however. In other words, when Searsburg says it provides enough electricity to power 1,500 average Vermont households, that is based on annual production - as are the figures of CO2 emissions avoided. In Searsburg's case, that number was 78,000 tons from 1997 to 2006.

Wind blows when it blows, sometimes too little and sometimes too much, and therefore wind energy can never be more than a small part of replacing fossil fuels. Furthermore there simply aren't enough wind-worthy sites, in Berkshire or Bennington counties at least, to do more than sprinkle towers and turbines. There should be a good,

healthy debate about the best places for them.

At least, that's how it looks from the White Oaks.

A writer and environmentalist, Lauren R. Stevens is a regular Eagle contributor.

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'Facing the windVirtually all forms of energy are subsidized.', *Berkshire Eagle, The* (online), 27 Sep 2010 A05 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1328121E2A508CDD



DIANE BRONCACCIO Recorder Staff *9/17/2010 MONROE -- The 20-turbine, \$100 million Hoosac Wind project is closer to breaking ground, after a six-year battle in court over a Wetlands Protection Act issue was resolved in favor of the developer, New England Wind LLC.

September 17, 2010 | Recorder, The [30 Day Embargo] (Greenfield, MA) 420 Words
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A public hearing has been scheduled for Sept. 27 by Monroe's Zoning Board of Appeals to hear requested changes to the special permit given to the turbine developer. According to project spokesman Paul Copleman, the public hearing is to address minor changes to the layout and the addition of a permanent meteorological tower to the project. The hearing begins at 6 p.m. in Monroe Town Hall, 3C School St.

Earlier this month, both Monroe and Florida residents approved a \$9,000-per-megawatt payment in lieu of taxes over the next 20 years, for the wind turbines built in their respective towns. At Monday's Monroe selectmen's meeting, the board officially approved the agreement, Copleman said.

Selectmen could not be reached for comment.

As nine, 1.5-megawatt turbines are to be built on Crum Hill in Monroe, this town of fewer than 100 people would see about \$121,000 per year in new revenue.

Florida, which has a population of fewer than 700 people, will see about \$162,000 per year for wind-turbines on Bakke Mountain. The turbines will be about 340 feet high, from the base to the tip of the turbine blade at its highest point, said Copleman.

New England Wind is a subsidiary of Iberdrola Renewables, which owns 40 wind farms throughout the country, including the wind farm in Lempster, N.H.

This summer, the state Supreme Judicial Court agreed with a Department of Environmental Protection commissioner, who had issued a 31-page decision that the plans to build gravel access roads for wind-turbine maintenance met DEP requirements.

The Hoosac Wind project had been stalled for at least the past six years, after opponents, calling them selves the "Ten Citizens Group," appealed a decision by a Department of Environmental Protection commissioner that the proposed gravel roads would not violate wetland protection laws. The access road to the turbines on Bakke Mountain in Florida would have crossed 12 intermittent streams, and opponents argued that the planned system of culverts proposed were insufficient. An "intermittent stream" is defined as a running body of water that does not flow year-round, according to the court judgment.

The \$100 million plan is to erect 11 windmills on Bakke Mountain in Florida and nine on Crum Hill in Monroe, on 72 acres of leased land north of Route 2. Copleman said only about 14 acres would contain the footprint of the windmill foundations and access roads. He said the wind farm would generate 30 megawatts of power -- enough electricity to run 10,000 homes.

Photo: A view of the Lempster, NH, wind farm, which is a 12-turbine wind farm developed by Iberdrola Renewables.

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'DIANE BRONCACCIO Recorder Staff *9/17/2010 MONROE -- The 20-turbine, \$100 million Hoosac Wind project is closer to breaking ground, after a six-year battle in court over a Wetlands Protection Act issue was resolved in favor of the developer, New England Wind LLC.', Recorder, The (online), 17 Sep 2010 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?

p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1324ECBC0D97C068>



Outlook 'bleak' for state wind bill - • A local lawmaker blames - Republicans for preventing a vote on the administration's bill to regulate turbine sites.

September 7, 2010 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Author: Scott StaffordBerkshire Eagle Staff | Section: Main | 667 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

A bill designed to regulate the location of wind power facilities in the state has stalled after being approved by the state House and Senate, and odds of final passage are "pretty bleak," according to a Berkshire County legislator.

With the Senate convening in informal session once or twice every week until the next session begins in January, it could still pass, said state Sen. Benjamin B.

Downing, D-Pittsfield. But it only takes one opponent to keep the bill inert until the following week.

"If the Republican minority wanted to allow it to pass, they could," Downing said. "But the odds are pretty bleak."

He said Republicans in the House used a procedural rule to prevent final passage of the bill during the final minutes of the formal 2010 legislative session. The maneuver essentially requires a final roll-call vote by the Senate, which is looking more unlikely.

Two different Republican state senators, Robert L. Hedlund and Michael R. Knapik, have already used the tactic to prevent a vote on the measure - most recently during an informal session last Tuesday. Using this tactic, Downing said, Republicans could prevent passage of the bill until the end of the year, effectively killing it. The legislation was submitted by the administration of Gov. Deval Patrick, which has pushed hard for its passage as a key part of his effort to bolster the state's renewable energy portfolio.

Opponents claim the bill would remove the ability of local communities to prevent a wind

farm project in their town. Supporters contend the opposite - that local towns will have the ability to kill a project they oppose. The proposed law would allow developers to appeal a denial at the local level to the state's Supreme Judicial Court. Similar to a recently passed Senate bill, the House version allows a wind power proposal approved by a local board to then proceed to a single state permitting board for final approval. It also allows opponents of a project to appeal the local approval of a project in the state's top court.

Critics of the legislation say the bill puts too much power at the state level. Supporters praise the bill for reducing red tape and time involved in permitting such projects.

lan Bowles, Massachusetts secretary of energy and environmental affairs, has said that the bill allows a local municipality to turn down a wind project they decide wrong for the town. Legal challenges to the state's top court would still be allowed.

And he noted the measure has an exact set of standards that would restrict development to 'only a handful of sites' in the Berkshires.

The House passed its bill 101-52 after two days of debate. The Senate passed a similar bill by voice vote in February.

State Reps. Daniel E. Bosley, Denis Guyer and William "Smitty" Pignatelli oppose the wind siting bill because they don't believe it provides enough control to local communities.

The legislation is a response to the difficulties and delays wind projects have faced in the permitting process and from legal challenges.

One example often cited in the debate is the more than \$100 million Hoosac Wind project, which was recently cleared to erect 20 wind turbines in the town of Florida and Monroe. The estimated cost of the project more than doubled during six years of legal challenges.

Downing expects that if Patrick is re-elected, a similar proposal will be submitted for passage during the next legislative session.

Bowles agreed.

"The Wind Energy Siting Reform Act - a top legislative priority this year - would level the playing field for wind energy projects that have local support, and we had hoped it would be on the Governor's desk by now," Bowles said Friday via e-mail. "Still, the bill passed both houses of the Legislature by substantial margins, and we have confidence that it will become law in due course."

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Legislation designed to regulate wind power projects like Berkshire Wind, part of which already has been built in the Hancock hills, is hung up in the state Legislature.

Scott Stafford / Berkshire Eagle Staff

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Wind turbine bill loses steam

September 7, 2010 | North Adams Transcript (MA) Author: Scott StaffordNew England Newspapers | Section: Main | 626 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

A bill designed to regulate the location of wind power facilities in the state has stalled after being approved by the state House and Senate, and odds of final passage are "pretty bleak," according to a Berkshire County legislator.

With the Senate convening in informal session once or twice every week until the next session begins in January, it could still pass, said state Sen. Benjamin B. Downing, D-Pittsfield. But it only takes one opponent to keep the bill inert until the following week.

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The legislation was submitted by the administration of Gov. Deval Patrick, which has pushed hard for its passage as a key part of his effort to bolster the state's renewable energy portfolio.

Opponents claim the bill would remove the ability of local communities from preventing a wind farm project in their town. Supporters contend the opposite - that local towns will have the ability to kill a project they oppose.

The proposed law would allow developers to appeal a denial at the local level to the state's Supreme Judicial Court. Similar to a recently passed Senate bill, the House version allows a wind power proposal approved by a

local board to then proceed to a single state permitting board for final approval. It also allows opponents of a project to appeal the local approval of a project in the state's top court.

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One example often cited in the debate is the more than \$100 million Hoosac Wind project, which was recently cleared to erect 20 wind turbines in the town of Florida and Monroe. The estimated cost of the project more than doubled during six years of legal challenges.

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Wind project payments OK'd

September 2, 2010 | North Adams Transcript (MA) Author: Ryan HuttonNorth Adams Transcript | Section: Main | 606 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

FLORIDA - In just 20 minutes on Wednesday night, voters approved a \$162,000-per-year payment in lieu of taxes agreement with the company behind the Hoosac Wind project to put 20 wind turbines on the Hoosac range.

The special town meeting at the town office building on Route 2 saw roughly 40 people quickly vote on all three warrant articles involving the New England Wind LLC project. The project calls for 12 wind turbines in Florida on Bakke Mountain and an additional eight in Monroe on Crum Hill. The vote on the payments clears the way for the project to begin after eight years of lawsuits and delaying tactics by environmental groups.

The 340-foot-tall turbines are expected to be able to produce 30 megawatts of clean energy per year. The project was estimated to cost \$45 million in 2003 dollars, but the cost is expected to increase significantly by

the start of construction, according to the developer.

James Art, a special town counsel hired to work on the payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) program, was on hand to explain to the voters how the deal would work in their favor. The PILOT agreement states that the town will receive \$9,000 per megawatt produced, per year, which translates into roughly \$162,000 per year for Florida.

Art said the payments will escalate along with the cost of living, according to the Consumer Price Index, but they will not be reduced if the index drops in future years. This agreement has a 20-year lifespan.

"The closest PILOT agreement I could find for the developer was in New York state, and it was for \$8,000 per megawatt, per year," Art said. "So this is a very good rate for the town."

One resident asked why the town is not going to simply tax the project over its estimated 30-year lifespan. Art said a PILOT program is actually much simpler for the town, and it guarantees consistent payments. "The town benefits by not having to go through constant assessments of the project every three years to determine its worth - and then those assessments can be challenged," Art said. "Plus, there's abatement procedures and devaluation to consider. What this does is guarantee payments based on the project's assessment in the initial years before it starts to depreciate in value. Right now, it's very high, and this assures it stays high, even when the turbines age and devalue."

He said there is almost no way of knowing how much the project could generate in taxes because virtually no renewable energy company would build a wind farm without a PILOT program. And, he said, the project would need to be built before it could be assessed for taxes to determine how much it would bring in for the town.

Another resident asked - because the agreement says \$9,000 per megawatt produced - what would happen to the payments if one of the turbines breaks and cannot operate. Art said the company is paying for the potential energy production, and the only way the payments would decrease would be if the turbine is "decommissioned," which requires it to be permanently removed from the site.

The town also approved an article granting an easement for the company to use a corner of the fire station's property for moving the turbines into place. A third warrant article asking for additional easements over municipal access roads was passed over because the company still needs to work out with the town on which easements are necessary. Art said that set of easements can be voted on at the next annual town meeting and will not hold up the start of construction, which could begin as early as this fall.

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Ryan HuttonNorth Adams Transcript, 'Wind project payments OK'd', *North Adams Transcript* (online), 2 Sep 2010 A01 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/132041352780D6B8



Wind bill is bad state policy

August 30, 2010 | Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA) Section: Main | 918 Words Page: A05 OpenURL Link

DALTON

Isupport wind energy projects that are appropriately planned, with community input and local boards and commissions having the ultimate authority for their approval.

It is important for me to say that in the very beginning of this writing because proponents of the Wind Siting Act in Massachusetts will often attempt to paint anyone objecting to this legislation as "anti wind energy" and that is simply not the case for me. Both the Jiminy Peak and Brodie Mountain projects are within my legislative district and I supported a public grant for the Jiminy Peak project.

State Senator Michael Knapik's stand on blocking the legislation during informal sessions of the Massachusetts Senate is applauded by me and many of my colleagues. We did our best to stop this bill in the House of Representatives, but despite our objections to it, the bill was passed and sent to the Senate. The vast number House members who supported this bill were from the Boston area or regions of the state where wind energy projects are unlikely to happen.

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The bill was filed by Governor Patrick at the beginning of this legislative session and when I first heard of the bill and the well-meaning intentions behind it, I was, like most people, favorable to the concept of a law that would help expedite wind projects. I mean, who wouldn't be? After the energy price spikes of just a few years ago and the obvious implications to our environment by the continued burning of fossil fuels, moving to a clean and renewable energy source is a no-brainer.

Then I actually read the troubled bill and discovered that it essentially removed local decision- making from the process and planning of these projects. It empowers a single state agency that permits projects and can overrule local decisions or special conditions on wind projects. The earliest version of the bill included a condition to allow these projects on state park and conservation lands. That provision was removed, but legislative supporters have already publicly vowed to file legislation in another session to possibly bring this and other removed provisions back.

The Massachusetts Municipal Association and planning agencies like the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission are opposed to the bill because of the loss of local control. The expedited process which would be set up for the wind energy industry does not exist for any other energy sector in Massachusetts.

It is common practice for the Legislature to do two things for a bill which has tremendous state-wide impacts. Typically the committee or committees charged with hearing the bill will take the show on the road and actually have hearings across the state to gauge support or problems with the legislation. This never happened.

It is also common practice to have bills go before more than one legislative committee to have those committees review the bills from their perspective too. For example, this bill has implications for both municipal and environmental law but neither of those committees heard the bill. Despite the fact that the bill would create new costs for state government, there was not a single hearing held on it by either Senate or House Ways and Means. This bill had one hearing before one committee, Energy, over 18 months ago.

When the Legislature attempts to circumvent this process, it almost always has led to poor public policy being adopted.

This legislation would impact two specific regions in Massachusetts with the most wind; Cape Cod and most of the ridge tops in the western end of the state. These two regions are coincidentally two of the poorest and are made up of towns unable to staff full-time planning and engineering departments.

The "expedited" process, giving these towns only 120 days to approve or deny an extremely complicated wind energy proposal is a joke and an obvious bonus to the industry pushing the legislation. If a town is unable to approve or deny a project within 120 days, the project would be automatically approved at the local level and forwarded to the single state agency for final approval.

Proponents, in their zeal to push this legislation through will commonly use the sole example of the six years stalled Hoosac Wind, as the reason for it. But they ignore the fact that dozens of projects, including many in the Berkshires, have been approved and built without lawsuits or local objections. When I reviewed information from the implications of wind projects in states that have an expedited process, my conclusion was that a slower, not faster process for these projects is in the public's best interest.

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Another rallying cry I have heard by proponents throughout the debate on the bill is that "it is easier to build a coalfired plant in Massachusetts than a wind farm." If that is truly the case, and I for one don't believe it is, then we should be using our time in the Legislature to make it harder to build the coal plant, not easier for wind energy corporations to exploit the limitations of our smallest towns and trampling local control.

I remain opposed to this legislation and hope that it fails in the Senate. It sets a terrible precedent for how we allow our communities to make determinations about energy projects and will have consequences that we in the western most region of the state and in some of the poorest communities in the state will have to deal with for decades.

Denis Guyer is state representative, Second Berkshire District.

The expedited process which would be set up for the wind energy industry does not exist for any other energy sector in

Massachusetts.

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New England Money & Business - Small wind project faces stiff breeze

August 29, 2010 | Westerly Sun, The (RI)

Author: STEVE LeBLANCAssociated Press Writer | Section: Money %26 Business | 712 Words

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New England Money & Business

Small wind project faces stiff breeze

BOSTON - Bob Anders used to count himself among the fans of wind power - until developers pitched the idea of a 10-turbine wind farm near his Webster home with blades reaching close to 500 feet in the air.

That's when Anders began having second thoughts about the disruption from the constant whooshing of the turbines to the repetitive glint of sunshine off the blades at certain times of the day, not to mention a feared drop in property values.

"I've dedicated the past two or three months of my life to reading about this and I haven't found anything good," Anders said. "It's a major impact on our neighborhood."

While the massive 130-turbine Cape Wind project in Nantucket Sound has battled lawsuits and jumped through permitting hoops for nearly a decade, the nation's first planned offshore wind farm isn't the only wind energy project in Massachusetts facing irked neighbors.

In the western Massachusetts town of Monroe, foes of a proposed 20-turbine wind power project fought for six years, all the way to the state's Supreme Judicial Court, to block the 30-megawatt Hoosac Wind project. The court last month allowed the project to move forward.

In Brimfield, wind developers are working to convince neighbors about a plan to install an eight to 10 turbine wind farm. And in Webster, Anders and some of the 70 or so other homeowners near the wind farm are planning to hire their own acoustic engineers. One complicating factor is that the project is actually just across the town line in Douglas.

The opposition of Anders and others is posing a threat to Gov. Deval Patrick's goal of generating 2,000 megawatts of wind power in Massachusetts by the year 2020 - an effort that could require the installation of up to 3,000 turbines, the bulk of them on land.

Although the installation of onshore wind turbines has picked up dramatically, that goal is still daunting. There have been just 22 turbines installed since 2001, with another 140 or so in the pipeline.

To help pick up the pace, Patrick pushed a bill he said would streamline the permitting process. That bill got within a final vote in the Senate before the clock ran out on the Legislature's formal session on July 31.

"The wind siting bill is enormously important," Patrick said Friday. "We have to get serious about moving to alternatives."

But the bill's critics say it undermines local control and would make it easier for developers to push through unpopular projects.

Eleanor Tillinghast of the environmental advocacy group Green Berkshires said she too used to be a fan of wind power, but now believes the amount of energy produced isn't worth the trade-off in noise, disruption and

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"We are not going to be changing our energy profile in New England with 1,000 wind turbines, but we are going to be destroying our environment," she said. "If we are talking about sacrificing all our mountaintops for 5-6 percent of our energy needs, that's not acceptable."

She said that while the industrial, multi-turbine projects pose some of the greatest threats to the environment, even one and two turbine communitybased projects can disrupt neighborhoods.

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The company is hoping to build up to 10 turbines in Brimfield, although the project is still in the planning phase. The company scheduled a community meeting last week and will go before a public hearing in September. Company spokesman John Lamontagne acknowledged that while turbines emit some sound, he said a well-sited project would minimize that effect. He also said in Brimfield, developers would rely on existing logging roads, although they would have to be widened.

He also said there are some benefits to local communities, including tax revenues and potential jobs. He said the Brimfield project could end up producing up to 20-25 megawatts or roughly enough energy for about 10,000 homes.

"That's clean, renewable power that doesn't emit junk into the air," he said. "Would folks rather have a coal plant in their backyard?"

State Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles said the state needs to push ahead on all renewable energy fronts, from solar to wind, including onshore projects.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

STEVE LeBLANCAssociated Press Writer, 'New England Money & BusinessSmall wind project faces stiff breeze', *Westerly Sun, The* (online), 29 Aug 2010 A19 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?
p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/131E95AE262CACB0>



Mass. wind project to face final hurdle

August 25, 2010 | Bennington Banner (VT) Section: Local/Region | 605 Words Page: A02 OpenURL Link

JENNIFERHUBERDEAU

North Adams Transcript

FLORIDA, Mass. - Construction work on the proposed \$90 million, 30-megawatt Hoosac Wind project could begin as early as September, should it pass its final hurdle at the beginning of the month.

Town officials will hold a special permit hearing and a special town meeting at the Florida Community Center on Route 2 beginning at 6 p.m. on Sept. 1.

During the special town meeting, voters will be asked to approve three warrant articles: one to accept a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) from project owner New England Wind LLC; another granting the town municipal easement over the Hoosac Wind project's access roads and the last to give the project developer the ability to make temporary road improvements, use town roads and store equipment on the land used by the fire station during the construction process.

According to Town Administrator Christine Dobbert, the special permit hearing will finalize the amount the town will receive in PILOT payments from New England Wind LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Iberdrola Renewables, which owns 40 wind farms, generating about 4,000megawatts, throughout the country.

"Our state permitting is entirely complete," Paul Copleman, a spokesman for Iberdrola Renewables, said Monday. "Providing everything goes well next week, our local permitting will be done as well. We certainly anticipate starting construction this year, with completion scheduled for 2011."

The project, which has been in the making since 2003, endured a six-year legal battle over wetlandspermitting issues before winning the final go-ahead from the state Supreme Judicial Court in July. Iberdrola Renewables took over the project in 2004 after purchasing it from enXco, the original developer.

The project, which calls for 20 turbines to be built on a combination of public and private land on Bakke Mountain in Florida and Crum Hill in Monroe, was originally slated to cost \$45 million.

"The costs have jumped significantly when you look at what it would cost to build a wind farm in 2003 versus the costs in 2010," Copleman said. "The costs in building a wind farm also are entirely up front - from the purchasing of the turbine parts to the construction."

According to the special permit, Iberdrola intends to install a dozen 1.5-megawatt GE Wind Energy turbines in Florida and eight in Monroe.

Each turbine will stand 213 feet tall at the hub, with three blades of 127 feet in length. With the blades in place, the windmills will reach about 340 feet high from top to bottom. Five of the turbines in Florida and an additional five in Monroe will sit on town-owned land.

In comparison, Zephyr, the privately- owned wind turbine at the top of Jiminy Peak in Hancock, is 386 feet tall with blades that are 123 feet in length.

Copleman said the project is expected to generate between 75 to 100 full-time construction and engineering jobs during the construction phase, which is typical for a wind farm of its size.

The company expects to have two full-time operations and maintenance employees to operate the plant throughout its 30year life expectancy.

According to the permit application, Iberdrola anticipates the project will generate more than \$250,000 in lease payments annually to the towns and private landowners with turbines situated on their properties.

"Total revenues to landowners will likely exceed \$7 million over the expected 30-year life of the project," the application states.

"Approximately one-half of these revenues will accrue directly to the towns because up to 10 of the 20 turbines are sited on land owned by the towns."

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'Mass. wind project to face final hurdle', *Bennington Banner* (online), 25 Aug 2010 A02 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/131FFD2EEB18BEDD



Out of wind again

August 24, 2010 \mid Berkshire Eagle, The (Pittsfield, MA)

Section: Main | 472 Words

Page: A06
OpenURL Link

Add the Wind Siting Reform Act to the list of good bills victimized by the combination of casino-mania and the Legislature's usual late session procrastination. Also add it to list of legislative priorities for the next session, if need be, when we hope a post-election Legislature will move quickly to address its many responsibilities rather than dawdle on too many of them for 18 months.

The wind siting bill was one of several left in limbo when Beacon Hill ended its formal session on July 31. It was briefly taken up Monday in an informal session, but under the rules guiding those sessions, a bill can be scrapped if just one legislator objects to it. It isn't difficult to find one lawmaker to oppose something, and in this case, Republican Michael Knapik of Westfield, a longtime foe of wind energy, stepped forward. Given that the Wind Siting Reform Act had passed both the House and Senate with solid majorities before bogging down in committee, its demise at the hands of one voter is the antithesis of democracy.

TheWind Siting Reform Act is designed to establish regulations governing the establishment of wind farms and assure local input while preventing special interest groups from cynically tying projects in bureaucratic red tape in the hope that they will be abandoned. The textbook example is the 130-turbine Cape Wind project that was bogged down by NIMBY-motivated lawsuits and a Byzantine permitting process for 11 years before finally gaining approval earlier this year. In an "only in Massachusetts" moment, a questioner at last week's gubernatorial debate asked Governor Patrick, an ardent wind proponent, why the Cape Wind project was "rushed" into existence.

Closer to home, the proposed Hoosac Wind project in Northern Berkshire County was delayed for six years by a flurry of lawsuits and appeals until the state Supreme Judicial Court finally cleared it a month ago. Wind projects must meet strict environmental regulations, but when those regulations are employed for no reason other than to block a good project reform becomes necessary. That is what the Wind Siting Reform Act is intended to do and will do if it can ever get through a legislative process that could evidently use some reform measures itself.

Besides majority legislative backing, the wind siting bill is supported by Governor Patrick as part of his program to make the state a leader in the development of alternative energy sources. Opponents argue that alternative energy won't contribute a great deal of energy to the grid, a point proponents don't dispute. Even a small contribution, however, will reduce American dependence upon domestic oil, which will limit disasters like the Gulf of Mexico spill, and upon foreign oil, which will mean fewer U. S. dollars going to countries that detest us. Responsible wind power must become a larger part of our energy mix, and efforts to prevent that from happening are simply irresponsible.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

'Out of wind again', *Berkshire Eagle, The* (online), 24 Aug 2010 A06 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/131CEC288EBD1240>



Final hurdle awaits - Town plans meeting and permit hearing

August 24, 2010 | North Adams Transcript (MA) Author: Jennifer HuberdeauNorth Adams Transcript| Section: Main | 709 Words Page: A01 OpenURL Link

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"Approximately one-half of these revenues will accrue directly to the towns because up to 10 of the 20 turbines are sited on land owned by the towns."

The company also anticipates making PILOT payments totaling \$270,000 over the 30-year span - about \$162,000 to Florida and \$108,000 to Monroe.

As part of the project, Iberdrola will construct two 16-footwide, permanent, gravel access roads, a garage and two 214 foot tall meteorological towers. New utility poles will also be installed on Tilda Hill, Main, Kingsley Hill and River roads.

In addition, the company anticipates that its construction loads, which are scheduled to come in from the eastern side of the mountain, will be limited by the state to Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. in a move to reduce traffic delays.

A State Police escort will accompany the loads on state highways, which will be held up at straight-aways to allow traffic to pass around them, the permit states.

To reach Jennifer Huberdeau, e-mail jhuberdeau@thetranscript.com.

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• Citation (aglc Style)

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Small Massachusetts turbine project twists in wind

August 23, 2010 | Daily Hampshire Gazette [30 Day Embargo] (Northampton, MA)

Section: Sci/Tech | 801 Words

OpenURL Link

BOSTON - Bob Anders used to count himself among the fans of wind power - until developers pitched the idea of a 10-turbine wind farm near his Webster home with blades reaching close to 500 feet in the air.

That's when Anders began having second thoughts about the disruption from the constant whooshing of the turbines to the repetitive glint of sunshine off the blades at certain times of the day, not to mention a feared drop in property values.

"I've dedicated the past two or three months of my life to reading about this and I haven't found anything good,"
Anders said. "It's a major impact on our neighborhood."

While the massive 130-turbine Cape Wind project in Nantucket Sound has battled lawsuits and jumped through permitting hoops for nearly a decade, the nation's first planned offshore wind farm isn't the only wind energy project in Massachusetts facing irked neighbors.

In Monroe, a small town in Western Mass., foes of a proposed 20-turbine wind power project fought for six years, all the way to the state's Supreme Judicial Court, to block the 30-megawatt Hoosac Wind project. The court last month allowed the project to move forward.

In Brimfield, wind developers are working to convince neighbors about a plan to install an eight to 10 turbine wind farm. And in Webster, Anders and some of the 70 or so other homeowners near the wind farm are planning to hire their own acoustic engineers. One complicating factor is that the project is actually just across the town line in Douglas.

The opposition of Anders and others is posing a threat to Gov. Deval Patrick's goal of generating 2,000 megawatts of wind power in Massachusetts by the year 2020 - an effort that could require the installation of up to 3,000 turbines, the bulk of them on land.

Although the installation of onshore wind turbines has picked up dramatically, that goal is still daunting. There have been just 22 turbines installed since 2001, with another 140 or so in the pipeline.

To help pick up the pace, Patrick pushed a bill he said would streamline the permitting process. That bill got within a final vote in the Senate before the clock ran out on the Legislature's formal session on July 31.

"The wind siting bill is enormously important," Patrick said Friday. "We have to get serious about moving to alternatives."

But critics say it undermines local control and would make it easier for developers to push through unpopular projects.

Eleanor Tillinghast of the environmental advocacy group Green Berkshires said she too used to be a fan of wind power, but now believes the amount of energy produced isn't worth the trade-off in noise, disruption and commercial development of green areas.

"We are not going to be changing our energy profile in New England with 1,000 wind turbines, but we are going to be destroying our environment," she said. "If we are talking about sacrificing all our mountaintops for 5-6 percent of our energy needs, that's not acceptable."

She said that while the industrial, multi-turbine projects pose some of the greatest threats to the environment, even one and two turbine community-based projects can disrupt neighborhoods.

First Wind, a Boston-based wind energy developer, is one of those companies riding the push for renewable sources of electricity.

The company is hoping to build up to 10 turbines in Brimfield, although the project is still in the planning phase. The company has scheduled a community meeting on Monday and will go before a public hearing in September.

Company spokesman John Lamontagne acknowledged that while turbines emit some sound, he said a well-sited project would minimize that effect. He also said in Brimfield, developers would rely on existing logging roads, although they would have to be widened.

He also said there are some benefits to local communities, including tax revenues and potential jobs. He said the Brimfield project could end up producing up to 20-25 megawatts or roughly enough energy for about 10,000 homes.

"That's clean, renewable power that doesn't emit junk into the air," he said. "Would folks rather have a coal plant in their backyard?"

State Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles said the state needs to push ahead on all renewable energy fronts, from solar to wind, including onshore projects.

He said the wind energy siting bill, which supporters still hope they can pass during the informal session, would go a long way to speeding that process by setting statewide standards on where projects could be sited, including requirements they be set back from homes and not infringe on the habitats of endangered species.

The bill would also for the first time allow local communities to charge developers for the cost of hiring their own technical experts to review permit applications, he said.

"It would take a lot of those objective arguments off the table," Bowles said. "The legislation in no way undercuts local authority."

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Small Mass. wind power project facing stiff breeze - Opposition to wind towers isn't just in Nantucket Sound

August 23, 2010 | Enterprise, The (Brockton, MA)

Section: News 299 Words

Page: 12 OpenURL Link

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'Small Mass. wind power project facing stiff breeze - Opposition to wind towers isn't just in Nantucket Sound', *Enterprise, The* (online), 23 Aug 2010 12 https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view? p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/131D3B5B8C70BCF8>



Small Mass. wind power project faces stiff breeze

August 23, 2010 | Journal Inquirer (Manchester, CT) Author: Steve LeBlancAssociated Press| Section: News| 799 Words OpenURL Link

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But the bill's critics say it undermines local control and would make it easier for developers to push through unpopular projects.

Eleanor Tillinghast of the environmental advocacy group Green Berkshires says she too used to be a fan of wind power, but now believes the amount of energy produced isn't worth the trade-off in noise, disruption, and commercial development of green areas.

"We are not going to be changing our energy profile in New England with 1,000 wind turbines, but we are going to be destroying our environment," she says. "If we are talking about sacrificing all our mountaintops for 5 to 6 percent of our energy needs, that's not acceptable."

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Mass. wind power facing a stiff breeze - Small Mass. wind power projects facing stiff breeze

August 23, 2010 | Times Argus, The (Barre-Montpelier VT) Author: STEVE LeBLANC The Associated Press | Section: NEWS02 | 803 Words OpenURL Link

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Small Mass. wind power project facing stiff breeze

August 22, 2010 \mid Deseret News, The (Salt Lake City, UT) Author: Steve Leblanc Associated Press \mid 806 Words

Page: WEB OpenURL Link

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"I've dedicated the past two or three months of my life to reading about this and I haven't found anything good," Anders said. "It's a major impact on our neighborhood."

While the massive 130-turbine Cape Wind project in Nantucket Sound has battled lawsuits and jumped through permitting hoops for nearly a decade, the nation's first planned offshore wind farm isn't the only wind energy project in Massachusetts facing irked neighbors.

In the western Massachusetts town of Monroe, foes of a proposed 20-turbine wind power project fought for six years, all the way to the state's Supreme Judicial Court, to block the 30-megawatt Hoosac Wind project. The court last month allowed the project to move forward.

In Brimfield, wind developers are working to convince neighbors about a plan to install an eight to 10 turbine wind farm. And in Webster, Anders and some of the 70 or so other homeowners near the wind farm are planning to hire their own acoustic engineers. One complicating factor is that the project is actually just across the town line in Douglas.

The opposition of Anders and others is posing a threat to Gov. Deval Patrick's goal of generating 2,000 megawatts of wind power in Massachusetts by the year 2020 — an effort that could require the installation of up to 3,000 turbines, the bulk of them on land.

Although the installation of onshore wind turbines has picked up dramatically, that goal is still daunting. There have been just 22 turbines installed since 2001, with another 140 or so in the pipeline.

To help pick up the pace, Patrick pushed a bill he said would streamline the permitting process. That bill got within a final vote in the Senate before the clock ran out on the Legislature's formal session on July 31.

"The wind siting bill is enormously important," Patrick said Friday. "We have to get serious about moving to alternatives."

But the bill's critics say it undermines local control and would make it easier for developers to push through unpopular projects.

Eleanor Tillinghast of the environmental advocacy group Green Berkshires said she too used to be a fan of wind power, but now believes the amount of energy produced isn't worth the trade-off in noise, disruption and commercial development of green areas.

"We are not going to be changing our energy profile in New England with 1,000 wind turbines, but we are going to be destroying our environment," she said. "If we are talking about sacrificing all our mountaintops for 5-6 percent of

our energy needs, that's not acceptable."

She said that while the industrial, multi-turbine projects pose some of the greatest threats to the environment, even one and two turbine community-based projects can disrupt neighborhoods.

First Wind, a Boston-based wind energy developer, is one of those companies riding the push for renewable sources of electricity.

The company is hoping to build up to 10 turbines in Brimfield, although the project is still in the planning phase. The company has scheduled a community meeting on Monday and will go before a public hearing in September.

Company spokesman John Lamontagne acknowledged that while turbines emit some sound, he said a well-sited project would minimize that effect. He also said in Brimfield, developers would rely on existing logging roads, although they would have to be widened.

He also said there are some benefits to local communities, including tax revenues and potential jobs. He said the Brimfield project could end up producing up to 20-25 megawatts or roughly enough energy for about 10,000 homes.

"That's clean, renewable power that doesn't emit junk into the air," he said. "Would folks rather have a coal plant in their backyard?"

State Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles said the state needs to push ahead on all renewable energy fronts, from solar to wind, including onshore projects.

He said the wind energy siting bill, which supporters still hope they can pass during the informal session, would go a long way to speeding that process by setting statewide standards on where projects could be sited, including requirements they be set back from homes and not infringe on the habitats of endangered species.

The bill would also for the first time allow local communities to charge developers for the cost of hiring their own technical experts to review permit applications, he said.

"It would take a lot of those objective arguments off the table," Bowles said. "The legislation in no way undercuts local authority."

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Shifting power on wind: Legislation to speed permitting for energy projects, overriding local zoning, splits area lawmakers

July 31, 2010 | Daily Hampshire Gazette [30 Day Embargo] (Northampton, MA) Author: BEN STORROW; Staff Writer | Section: Politics | 1627 Words OpenURL Link

A view of the Mount Tom Range in Easthampton and Holyoke, site of a proposed wind-power project. Holyoke Gas and Electric is pursuing a plan to install four turbines capable of producing up to 1.65 megawatts per tower.

A cluster of windmills operate on the north side of Mars Hill Mountain in Mars Hill, Maine, in January 2007. Projects like these could spring up in the county with the passage of a new wind-energy bill.

One of the new towers, center, for the wind turbines of the new Alta Wind Energy Center can be seen among older wind turbines Tuesday in Mojave, Calif. A new bill passed by the Legislature may result in some wind projects springing up in the county.

AMHERST - Hampshire County is home to no commercial or community-scale wind turbines. That may change following agreement this week on a controversial bill designed to expedite permits for windmills.

The legislation produced a sharp debate between alternative energy advocates, who argue the measure was needed to spur development of wind power in the commonwealth, and advocates of local control, who say the bill gives too much power to the wind industry to overrun municipal zoning bylaws.

Lawmakers reached a compromise on the bill late Thursday. The measure calls on communities with potential windenergy sites to create local boards to review and approve projects.

The proposal produced a rare division between Hampshire County's Senate and House delegations. All five of the county's representatives - state Reps. Peter Kocot, D-Northampton, Ellen Story, D-Amherst, Stephen Kulik, D-Worthington, John Scibak, D-South Hadley, and Dennis Guyer, D-Dalton - voted against the measure. State Sens. Stanley Rosenberg, D-Amherst, and Benjamin Downing, D-Pittsfield, both supported the bill.

Downing, a member of the House and Senate conference committee on the bill, said the legislation was needed to address the steady flow of appeals that wind projects generate.

"We think there is a compelling case to be made that instead of fighting over projects for years, we get to a 'yes' or a 'no' quicker, moving ahead with the good projects and rejecting the bad ones," Downing said Friday.

Gov. Deval Patrick has said he would sign the legislation.

Advocates of the measure point to the Hoosac Wind project in Florida and Monroe as examples of why the new legislation is needed.

Ken Kimmel, general counsel for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, said that project had been initially approved by the two towns' conservation commissions. Yet a string of appeals by opponents of the 30-megawatt project saw it first appealed to the Department of Environmental Protection's regional office, then the DEP commissioner, then to superior court and finally to the state Supreme Judicial Court - all of which approved the project, Kimmel said.

"That's the problem that we want to fix," Kimmel said.

lan Bowles, secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, made a similar point.

"Our environmental laws are there to protect the environment," Bowles said. "They are not there for fights about aesthetics, and I think this law remedies the phenomenon we're seeing of essentially using the environmental appeals process for delay, not environmental protection."

Where power lies

The bill's opponents argued the measure gave too much power to the wind industry to override local zoning bylaws.

"What the wind industry wants is a process where there are no mechanisms for people to adequately stop a wind project," said Guyer, who represents the Hampshire County towns of Cummington, Plainfield and Middlefield. "If a community puts forward specific specifications for a wind project, they can be overruled."

The House passed its version of the bill by a 101-52 margin July 14. The legislation establishes a single state windsiting standard for wind turbines, creates a wind turbine permitting board at the local level and makes the state Energy Facilities Siting Board the sole permitting authority at the state level.

"I think I speak for all of us in saying that we are in favor of wind energy, but this bill left a lot questions unanswered," said Story, the Amherst representative, speaking of the other members in the Hampshire County delegation. "I was just not convinced that the streamlining had enough protection in it for local control."

She said she was looking for a better balance between local rule and quicker approvals.

Handling appeals

The crux of disagreement centers on the appeals process. Under the new law, a windmill project will not move forward if it is rejected by a municipality's wind-permitting board, which would be made up of members of the conservation commission, zoning board of appeals and planning board. The developer could appeal that ruling in court, as is now the case.

However, if a community group objected to the proposal, its appeal would go straight to the Energy Facility Sighting Board and then the state Supreme Court. Opponents of the bill argue that those two bodies strongly favor windenergy developers.

The legislation could change the landscape of a county that, according to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, does not have a single large-scale wind turbine.

However, the lack of turbines in Hampshire County does not reflect a lack of wind.

A 2009 Department of Energy Resources study of potential windmill sites on state land identified a high potential wind plot on the Plainfield-Cummington town line, for instance. The report predicted that five turbines there could produce 8 megawatts of electricity. The report also identifies two potential turbine sites in Middlefield.

Yet those sites will likely not be developed, Downing said, as the new regulations will not apply to state parks and forests. The installation of a windmill on such lands would require a vote of the Legislature, as is now the case, he said.

Cummington, Plainfield and Middlefield, because of their elevation, boast the highest wind potential in the county, according to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. All three towns have areas with reported wind speeds of 7 to 7.5 meters per second. Chesterfield, Goshen, Huntington, Westhampton, Worthington and Williamsburg all have areas with reported winds of at least 6 to 6.5 meters per second and some, more limited areas, with wind speeds of 6.5 to 7 meters per second, according to the state.

Wind speeds of at least 6.4 to 7 meters per second are considered the minimum required to operate a 50-meter

wind turbine.

Now, only one wind project has been proposed in Hampshire County. The Hilltown Resource Management Cooperative is spearheading an effort to build a single 100 to 200 kilowatt turbine at New Hingham Elementary School in Chesterfield.

Eric Weiss, administrator of the cooperative, said his organization is conducting a feasibility study with the help of a \$30,000 grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. The group is in the middle of that study, Weiss said. He described himself as a supporter of the new legislation.

"I know that both the Green Communities program and this new wind legislation are trying to expedite green energy production statewide," Weiss said. "I think as long as it's done right, I am a big supporter."

Project barriers

James Manwell, director of the University of Massachusetts Wind Energy Center, reckons that the lack of wind development in the area - and the state as a whole - is due to the number of bureaucratic hurdles it takes to install a wind turbine in the state.

"Government policy is not as effective as it could be," Manwell said in a phone interview.

He listed complicated tax credits, complex zoning laws and a lack of technical assistance for small-scale developers as some of the primary impediments to the development of wind power in Massachusetts.

The areas of Massachusetts that have been most successful with installing windmills have been municipalities with existing town-owned electric companies. They possess expertise in managing electric systems, Manwell said. He noted that towns like Hull and Princeton have been successful in installing turbines for this very reason.

"In the big picture, wind is generally low (environmental) impact and Hampshire County has areas that are windy enough to do it," he said. "A rational policy would be to make it easier to do, but I am not optimistic about it."

While the county does not have much in the way of wind power, it is ringed by proposed wind developments. Holyoke Gas and Electric is pursuing a plan to install four turbines capable of producing up to 1.65 megawatts per tower on the Mount Tom Range in Holyoke.

Three proposed wind-power developments are before the Berkshire County town of Savoy. Minuteman Wind seeks a permit for five-turbine, 12.5-megawatt project, Patriot Renewables is pursuing a plan for a 16-turbine, 32-megawatt wind farm and LZ Wind has a plan for a sole 900-kilowatt turbine in the town, according to Massachusetts Clean Energy Center.

Both Downing and Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles, supporters of the legislation, said they do not expect the new law to spur a proliferation in the number of on-shore windmills.

Bowles noted that the state produces between 40 and 50 megawatts of wind power and has a goal of producing 2,000 megawatts by 2020. Much of that power would come from offshore developments like Cape Wind, Bowles said.

Bowles said officials must be selective about on-shore sites. "We have the third-highest population density in the country.

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Too big a rush on Hoosac Wind

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Now that the wind project on Hoosac Mountain in Florida and on Crum Hill in Monroe has the go- ahead, this is what we can expect to happen on the mountain. First, four miles of road are bulldozed up the slopes through fairly undisturbed forest. Enormous amounts of fill will be required, drainage will be disrupted and ledges blasted. The summit of the ridge, for about a mile, will be capped by a road 35 feet wide. The ridge is not flat, so the higher elevations will be blasted, bulldozed into the low places, and thousands of truckloads of fill trucked up the hill to make a level road. More carbon dioxide will be produced by this project than it will ever save.

Eleven towers over 400 feet high, four times the height of the monument on Mt. Greylock, will loom over the village of Clarksburg, which had no say in this matter. North Adams will also be affected. In fact the towers will be visible for many miles. The Wind Energy Reform Act does not address the fact that the impact of these things is regional.

Massachusetts is a small state and these are our only mountains. Vermont may have some to spare, but Western Massachusetts has all we've got and they are very important to us in many ways. What is the rush so that these things must be pushed through without citizens having the usual rights of dissent and comment? This sort of drastic change must be done with great care.

PAMELA WEATHERBEE Williamstown

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Wind bill stirs up debate in Mass.

July 17, 2010 | Bennington Banner (VT) Section: Region | 633 Words Page: A05 OpenURL Link

SCOTT STAFFORD

The Berkshire Eagle

BOSTON - Even though the state House of Representatives has passed its version of wind siting reform, the debate over local control of wind power projects continues to swirl.

The new law would allow developers to appeal a denial at the local level to the state's Supreme Judicial Court. Similar to a recently passed Senate bill, the House version allows a wind power proposal approved by a local board to then proceed to a single state permitting board for final approval. It also allows opponents of a project to appeal the local approval of a project in the state's top court. Critics of the legislation say the bill puts too much power at the state level.

Supporters offer praise

Supporters praise the bill for reducing red tape and time involved in permitting such projects.

According to lan Bowles, Massachusetts secretary of energy and environmental affairs, the bill is very clear in mandating that if a local municipality decides a wind project is wrong for the town, that is the end of the state permitting process for that proposal. Legal challenges to the state's top court would still be allowed.

"Denial on the local level cannot be appealed to the state," Bowles said. "That's how it's worded. It's open and shut. And it sets up a very exact set of standards - no development on stateprotected lands and away from recreation and population centers, which leaves only a handful of sites in Berkshire County."

The House passed its bill Wednesday 101-52 after two days of debate. The Senate passed a similar bill by voice vote in February. They both await action by the House- Senate Conference Committee to iron out the differences, and if that process is successful, observers expect the governor to sign the bill. But some question the clarity of the wording in the bill, and whether it really gives local boards the final word in denying a proposed wind energy project.

"The bill concentrates too much power in Boston and not enough with local boards," said Tad Ames, president of the Berkshire Natural Resources Council. "And most troubling is that state environmental laws are being replaced in this bill by standards that could be waived or relaxed should a developer plead difficulty." State Rep. William "Smitty" Pignatelli, D-Lenox, said he opposed the bill from the start. "It provides a serious lack of local control," he said. "It circumvents the local planning process and allows developers to circumvent that process."

Local review lost?

Nat Karns, executive director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, said the bill would leave the local permitting process "unworkable" by only giving the local board 120 days to complete the permitting process for a wind project.

"The wording would allow a developer to go to the state wind siting board with or without approval from a local board," he said.

The legislation is a response to the difficulties and delays wind projects have faced in the permitting process and from legal challenges. One example often cited in the debate is the more than \$100 million Hoosac Wind project, which was recently cleared to erect 20 wind turbines in the town of Florida and Monroe. The estimated cost of the project more than doubled during six years of legal challenges.

Developers seem relieved at the bill's passage because it clearly lays out the process and the timelines for permitting a wind project. Tyler Fairbank, CEO of local green energy development firm EOS Ventures, said the passage of the bill was a "significant" step forward. "As a developer, you want to understand the process you have to go through - having no process is scary," he said. "And it will certainly result in more interest in developing wind in Western Massachusetts because now we understand the rules of the game. But whether more projects gain approval at the state or local level is yet to be seen."

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