



March 22, 2004

To the Editor:

Huge Kemper's recent letter to the editor regarding wind power had many factual inaccuracies and misleading statements. Unfortunately, this seems to be the norm for the Glebe Mountain Group in their quest to prevent development and push their aesthetics upon others.

I agree that the debate is about whether the advantages of wind power in Vermont outweigh its disadvantages. However we can't have such a debate when groups like the Glebe Mountain Group make-up information and call it "facts".

Here is the truth regarding wind power:

1) Vermont's wind power capacity is tremendous. While it is true that Vermont ranks low among states in wind resources this is simply because of Vermont's size compared to other states. VT has the same average wind speeds as the top ranked states, just not as much land. Vermont could easily produce 20% of our electricity with wind power. Wind power in Vermont can meaningfully increase Vermont's energy supplies over the next fifteen years during a time when Vermont will need substantial amounts of new power.

(2) While it is true that wind power is supplemental to other energy sources, it is also true that it will be a substitute for polluting power. That wind power is intermittent has no effect on its ability to replace polluting sources of power. Kemper and others like to ignore that hydropower is also intermittent and confuse reliability with intermittency. Wind power is extremely reliable, modern wind turbines are available to produce power close to 100% of the time. Nuclear power stations in comparison are only available 80-85% of the time. Wind plants like the ones proposed for Londonderry will be producing power more than 80% of the time. When the turbines are producing, that is power that will not be purchased from other sources on the margin, which in the New England Power Pool is natural gas power.

(3) Nobody is claiming that wind power in Vermont will solve our global warming problem, or eliminate acid rain. What we are saying is that every kilowatt generated by wind power is a kilowatt not generated by polluting sources. Wind power is just part of the solution. Global warming and acid rain will only get worse if we deny that Vermont can be part of the solution. Wind energy opponents often choose to ignore that there are several coal plants in neighboring states that do pollute Vermonter's air and increase acid rain levels.

(4) Yes, wind projects in Vermont will change the look of some of our ridgelines. However, the majority of Vermonters are not opposed to this change. The majority either enjoys the looks of turbines or they are willing to accept them because they understand the benefits. The turbines do need

to be lighted as per FAA guidelines but the wind developers are working with the FAA to limit the lighting as much as possible. They will not “illuminate” the night sky. There is no proof that turbines will disrupt migration patterns and disruption to wildlife, if any, will be minimal.

(5) Wind power can contribute meaningfully to the Vermont economy. Producing 10% of our electricity with wind (6 wind farms, spread across the state) would generate: 140 jobs during development, 300 during construction and 40 for operations thereafter. These wind farms would produce annually: \$2.7 million to land owners, \$2.2 million in property taxes, and \$0.7 million in state taxes. In addition, having wind farms in VT is critical to having a wind farm industry in VT. We won't likely entice a large turbine manufacture to VT, but we could build on our current collection of small-to-medium sized businesses that service the wind energy industry (the fastest growing energy industry in the US and world). If VT was the first state to get 10% of its energy from wind power we would gain international attention and would be successful in bringing companies here to be part of a cluster of wind energy related companies. If we don't have any wind farms, we will not have any more wind energy companies and could loose the ones we have to states that have wind farms.

Contrary to the scare tactics of the Glebe Mt. Group wind energy does not pose any threat to tourism or to property values. I challenge them to produce any independent study to back-up their claims. All the surveys and studies that I've seen from around the world shows that wind farms will not harm our tourism industry or property values.

The Glebe Mountain Group's call for a moratorium is just a way to avoid the permitting process that is based exclusively on facts. The existing permitting process deals with very issues that Kemper and the Glebe Mt. Group are raising. The permitting process is there to expose the facts on the costs and benefits of proposed projects and then to make an informed decision based on those facts serving the best interests of Vermont. .

I think that the future of wind energy in Vermont should be debated and discussed. Unfortunately, I fear that many wind power opponents are not interested in a discussion as much as they are in prohibiting any changes to their view, regardless of the facts about the economic and environmental benefits of wind energy.

Andrew Perchlik

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