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Survey of NEK Visitors Finds Tourism Won't Be Hurt by Windfarm

MONTPELIER – According to a new survey, 95 percent of visitors to Vermont's Northeast Kingdom would not be deterred from further visits by the existence of a proposed four-turbine windfarm.

And of visitors who ski, 92 percent said they would ski in the same region if the wind turbines were located on the nearby ridgeline.

These are some of the findings of a new survey conducted for East Haven Windfarm, which is proposing a four-turbine demonstration project atop East Mountain in the town of East Haven, VT. The survey, conducted by the Institute for Integrated Rural Tourism, contradicts claims by windfarm opponents that wind turbines would hurt tourism in the Northeast Kingdom.

“The more evidence we gather, the more we are convinced that wind turbines do not drive people away from an area,” said Mathew Rubin, president of East Haven Windfarm. “In fact, we believe that our project will become a tourist attraction itself, and we're planning facilities to accommodate visitors.”

The survey asked questions of 102 visitors at the Waterford and Lyndon information centers off Interstate 89 on five separate days to find out if visitors would be deterred from visiting the area if the East Mountain Demonstration Project were to be built.

Visitors were told of the windfarm proposal and asked for their reaction. Respondents were shown a photographic simulation of how the wind turbines would appear from the town of Burke and asked whether that would deter them from visiting or skiing in the region. When survey respondents were asked to view the photo simulation along with the question: “Would the presence of these four wind towers deter you from visiting this region of Vermont?” 95 percent said no.

Some 68 percent of the respondents said they ski and of those, 92 percent said they would continue to ski in the area if wind turbines were located there. Sixty-three percent of the respondents said they had seen a windfarm in the past. Many had seen large installations in West Texas, Germany, Minnesota, New Zealand and California.

Visitors responding to the survey came from around the US as well as from overseas and had numerous destinations within Vermont including Barton, Newport, Burlington, Stowe, Greensboro, Woodstock, Middlebury, St. Johnsbury and Jay Peak. Thirty-two percent of those surveyed had been to Vermont 10 or more times, 28 percent had visited Vermont from 2-4 times, 5 percent of the respondents had visited Vermont between 5 and 10 times, and 35 percent of the respondents were first time visitors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Dave Rapaport, vice president, 802-229-1440, or dave@easthavenwindfarm.com