



MICHAEL DOHERTY / Observer-Dispatch

The sun sets on the Fenner Wind Farm in Madison County. The Fenner Wind Farm has 20 windmills and is located off Route 13 northeast of Cazenovia.

Profit, not power, the major goal behind wind farms

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Due to its relatively easy access to transmission lines, Upstate New York state may end up with some 20,000 wind towers (e.g. www.windaction.org/documents/3575).

If this concerns you, keep reading. Although no wind farm is proposed for my immediate area, I believe that all Upstate New Yorkers are part of one community. See this Web page for a map, plus a list New York towns where wind farms are being targeted -- www.savewesternny.org/proposed.html.

To make this complex but profoundly significant issue easier to understand I have written the following summary. Please keep in mind that my comments are about industrial wind power only, as home based (or boat) systems are usually a good thing.

On the surface, wind power seems to be a potentially good thing: a clean, renewable source of energy, etc. But scientists don't make decisions based on first glance impressions.

To come to a meaningful understanding of complex matters like industrial wind power, open-minded people need to do a thorough examination of all major components of the issue, plus do a review of accumulated evidence to date (e.g. from wind power experiences in Europe).

Such an analysis will lead to two fundamental conclusions: 1) there is no consequential environmental benefit to industrial wind power, and 2) it is being promoted because it is an extremely lucrative business opportunity.

Here is a brief explanation as to why these are so.

1) There is no real environmental benefit as: a) wind is an unpredictable commodity. b) Energy generated from industrial wind power can not be stored. c) Because of a and b, as energy demand grows and wind power is added to the grid, 100 percent backup from conventional energy must be also still be built. d) Even in the short term, due to the complexity of nuclear and coal-fired power plants, they can not simply be "turned down" when wind power is available. In New York, hydro power (a clean, low cost, non-fossil fuel energy source) is typically cut back instead. So, since coal-fired power plants must operate at full capacity 24/7, and since conventional power plants must continue to be built — no emissions are reduced!

2) This is a lucrative business opportunity as: a) take the cost to build and erect the average industrial wind tower, b) subtract from that the government provided financial incentives (your money). c) Then the government requires the local utility to buy all of the electricity generated (needed or not) and often to pay a premium rate (again, with your money). d) After taking all of these numbers into account, each turbine turns out to be a government guaranteed 25 percent-plus per year income generator.

How did this all happen? Basically: a) global warming has become a hot political item, b) so Congress decided that they had to do something to show that they were "addressing the problem," and they set up a committee to determine what to do. c) Accurately sensing an opportunity to tap into some big money, the industrial wind power special interest lobby heavily influenced the process (some say they wrote the entire legislation — not that unusual. Very similar to oil companies influencing our

energy policies.)

The bottom line is that what was legislated was not about helping the environment, and was not about benefiting taxpayers. It was principally designed to enrich large business concerns who wanted to feed at the government trough. Again, (unfortunately) not all that uncommon. (See www.ncpa.org/studies/renew/renew2.html.)

When an industrial wind power developer targets a community, their objective is to put up as many 25 percent income generators as they can get away with.

To achieve this financial goal, developers employ three effective strategies: 1) they not only take advantage of the global warming concern that is prevalent, they make it into a patriotic matter to support their business, 2) they know that most people do not understand the complexities of the wind power issue, so they frequently make broad, superficial, unsupportable benefit claims, and

3) they rely on the support they get from local people that they essentially buy off — with taxpayer money! Some reports show that they particularly target areas that are economically depressed to make their “financial incentives” more likely to be accepted.

Since this problem was legislatively created, it must be legislatively fixed. That will only happen when citizens are informed, and when citizens then subsequently speak up.

As a minimum we need to contact our state legislators to get them to enact at least a one-year moratorium on wind farms. Additionally, the state needs to develop a comprehensive Resource Management Plan to deal with this and other resource issues.

To research this topic to your own satisfaction, please consider the findings of independent, environmentally concerned scientists that are spelled out at such sites as www.wind-watch.org/ and www.windaction.org/. Please consider making a donation to support their work. If after reading these you have any questions, please let me know at “aaprjohn@northnet.org”.

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