

Dear Committee:

It is imperative that you take action to stop the PTCs for industrial wind development. This is an industry causing grave harm in the state of Vermont.

My name is Lisa Wright Garcia and I live in West Rutland, which is one of the four towns proposed to be “host towns” to the Grandpa’s Knob Wind Project. I grew up in the home in which I live today. I have long considered myself an environmentalist, have studied environmental science at UVM and have taught for Mass. Audubon. I have also tried to live the traditional Vermont values of good stewardship towards our land taught to me by my grandparents. My home is adjacent to my mother’s family farm, in a valley in the shadow of the ridgeline proposed for this project. Many members of my family and lifelong friends still live in the valley we call Whipple Hollow. We are land poor all of us, our property is the only equity we have.

Steve Eisenberg of Reunion Power recently made statements in the local newspaper that his Grandpa’s Knob Wind Project was not finished, but was only on “hiatus”. We fear that this is true because he has 5 years of data on wind measurements, he has completed environmental studies, the PTCs were renewed by congress, and because as he said himself “we have friends in high places”. More to the point, there is a system in place in our state government which favors developers of energy projects, and there is a powerful political will to support large scale renewables at any cost and without adequate scrutiny.

We educated our townspeople and worked the democratic process in our four towns since we were made aware of this threat. Many, many hours of time have been spent on this issue, by town residents, Select board members, planning commissioners, and others – all scrambling to understand the impacts to our town from someone else’s idea. Revolutionary War re-enactors presented the historical significance of the pristine Hubbardton Battlefield site and why it is so important to keep that site intact and unmarred by development on the also historic Pittsford Ridge. The Rutland County Audubon Society and the Lake Bomoseen Association have both voted to oppose the project. The Select Boards of all four towns have voted to oppose this project. Three of the four towns have amended their town plans prohibiting ridgeline industrial wind and the fourth is in the process of doing so. And the town of Hubbardton has held a town vote which in a landslide voted to oppose industrial wind. What additional tools do our small towns have to tell this developer “no”, your project is not welcome in our town? Yet the current Section 248 system would allow the PSB to place little or no weight on these local decisions.

The developer is still here, trying to get new leases to replace the landowners who have gotten out of their leases as they have decided that this deal wasn’t what it was purported to be by the developer. He is still here, because the system is such that he could still apply for a CPG, he could still cash in on the PTCs, and the system or his “friends in high places” could allow him to proceed with this project in spite of the solid opposition from our towns and opposition from our state Agency of Natural Resources.

Lisa Wright Garcia

