From: Penny Gray
To: Todd, Fred
Cc: freeportme@aol.com
Subject: Bowers Wind Project
Date: Wednesday, March 23, 2011 2:46:38 PM

Dear Mr. Todd,

I am writing to respectfully request a public hearing on the proposed Bowers Wind project.

In the 1970's and 1980's there was a rush to dam all the rivers in Maine when FERC laws were eased to meet an energy crisis. What stopped this from happening? Something called the Maine Rivers Study. Maine was the first in the nation to survey all its rivers and designate them in three classes. The rivers that were spared, the Dead, Kennebec and Penobscot, have become multibillion dollar economic assets for Maine with large economic multipliers that ripple through rural and state economies, providing thousands of jobs. It would have been a tragedy to destroy these assets.

We are about to make that mistake with our mountains. Three hundred miles of the state's ridge lines and wild mountain areas are being targeted to solve a perceived energy crisis in southern New England, but the expedited legislation pushed through by Governor Baldacci was deeply flawed. Not one representative of Maine's largest employment sector, tourism, was on the governor's task force. There was no discussion of the current mountain and wild land economies that support Maine's rural areas. There was no Maine Mountain Study.

What is the economic value of a viewscape that tourists travel to from all over Maine, New England, the US and the world to see and experience? What will this multibillion dollar value be when these same viewscapes are bristling with blades, dissected with industrial roads and transmission lines and blinking with red aviation lights? What will this value be when there are so few unspoiled landscapes left in our state? Will Maine be positioned to be a world tourism leader and destination because it wisely assessed these viewsheds and their greater economic value and set them off limits to wind power and other transforming, fragmenting development? Or will Maine's economy be bankrupted by this rush to industrialize her most valuable assets?

The Maine Department of Tourism figures prove that tourism is by far Maine's biggest economic engine. In 2009, 34 million tourists provided over 170,000 full time jobs, 535 million in tax revenues, and ten billion dollars in goods and services. DEP permitting applications for industrial wind mandate proof of tangible benefits for the host community. What about all the other communities within a thirty mile radius that have to live with it, visually? Do the tangible benefits of all of Maine's proposed industrial wind projects combined even come close to tourism's figures? Has the cumulative visual impact of these projects on twelve thousand square miles of Maine's scenic viewshed been evaluated from an economic perspective? And if not, why not? The tangible benefits of tourism will last forever only if we protect Maine's iconic viewsheds from inappropriate development. The tangible benefits gained by host townships won't be enough to decommission one single turbine in twenty years if the wind company declares bankruptcy prior to its fifteenth year of operation, which is a very real possibility when the federal subsidies dry up.

The following are passages taken from the 2006 Brookings Institute Report: 'Charting Maine's Future, An Action Plan for Promoting Sustainable Prosperity and Quality Places':
"In the long run, the slow degradation of Maine's vivid and distinctive quality of place (and the reputation it supports) may be the greatest cost to Maine of all."
"Another problem, meanwhile, is the defacement of Maine's scenic corridors."
"Maine's stellar quality of place, its traditional towns and beautiful landscapes and seacoasts,constitutes a major, appreciating asset in an age when retaining and attracting workers and retirees matters intensely."
"The state should continue to invest urgently in protecting and enhancing its top-notch quality of place, for that is its 'calling card,' its brand, and its truest source of prosperity."
"As its world-famous brand declares, Maine has - in its vivid small towns and waterfronts, its lakes and fields and rocky coastline - exactly the sort of authenticity and quality of place that can set a place apart. Maine is unforgettable and distinctive, and that matters."

The state paid a lot of money for that report. We should be following it, and promoting sustainable prosperity and our unforgettable quality of place. Bottom line, the economic cost/benefit analysis proves

that industrial wind is fiscally unsound. There are no benefits for the majority of us Mainers, and even less for Maine's mountains, waters and wildlife. Worse, industrial wind could very well destroy the tourism infrastructure its rural natives count on for their very survival.

Respectfully,

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