

You may have read some recent letters to the editor about the proposal by Apex Clean Energy to build an industrial wind facility on the top of North Mountain in Botetourt County. If you haven't been following this story, the Botetourt Board of Supervisors approved a special exception permit for the Rocky Forge Wind project in January of this year. One of the selling points for getting approval of this project was the presumably "green" nature of electricity generated by wind turbines. I included myself in that group of people, and my objection to the project was the negative impact it would have on the beautiful views in this region. But, upon further investigation, there are many other aspects of this proposed industrial wind facility that cast a large shadow of doubt upon its "greenness":

- 1) The production of electricity by wind does not reduce the need for standard fossil fuel power generation. This is because of the unpredictable nature of wind. This is well documented, and there is an excellent paper titled "Death by Wind" written by Dr. David Schnare of the Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy that provides more details. In the March 2016 issue of Discover magazine, in an article titled "Avoiding the Blackout of the Century" there is real concern that adding wind based electricity to the national power grid increases the chance that there will be massive blackouts that could result in no electricity for millions of people for days.
- 2) The number of birds killed annually by industrial wind facilities is estimated to be about 600,000. This is well documented (for example, visit the American Bird Conservancy website), and the fact that North Mountain is known to be on the migratory route of many birds (including hawks and eagles) makes it a likely site for yet more bird deaths.
- 3) At the proposed Rocky Forge location, the winds are at the minimum frequency and speed that can actually generate electricity. While it is claimed by Apex that the site will generate enough electricity to provide up to 20,000 homes annually, the actual output is expected is only sufficient for 8,000 homes. The PMJ Interconnect feasibility study for the connection to the Rocky Forge facility is only considering a capacity of 10 MW of electricity, far below the rated 75 MW capacity of the proposed 25 wind turbines.
- 4) Wind turbines frequently catch fire. Given the location on top of North Mountain, this could easily lead to forest fires that would destroy the ecology of the mountain and result in runoff degrading the quality of clean streams.

A group of people from Rockbridge, Botetourt, and Alleghany counties have gotten together to oppose the Rocky Forge Wind project, and have set up a website [www.VirginiansForResponsibleEnergy.org](http://www.VirginiansForResponsibleEnergy.org) that has a lot of information about wind power in general, and about problems with the Rocky Forge project in particular. I urge you to visit this site and learn more why green isn't always green.

A Concerned Citizen of Rockbridge County