

Wind Turbines Have No Place On Steep Ridges

Editor, The News-Gazette:

As an ardent supporter of alternative energy, I thought the Commonwealth's Permit By Rule would encourage wind and solar energy. However, it is now being manipulated and exploited in order to take advantage of the subsidies being offered – in this case, the Rocky Forge Industrial Wind project proposed for development on top of North Mountain by Apex.

Consider:

- 25 turbines, standing 550 feet – almost the length of two football fields – on top of North Mountain;
- each turbine occupying five acres of land;
- building 11 miles of roads, 36 feet wide, up steep inclines in order to transport the large industrial machines;
- significant erosion & sediment problems in the groundwater and streams headed for the Chesapeake Bay;
- blasting and leveling very steep slopes to install concrete pads;
- lights on the turbines blinking at all times and visible in five counties;
- documented harm at great distances to humans and animals from 24/7 turbine sound;
- dead eagles, dead migrating songbirds, dead bats;
- fragmentation and destruction of wildlife habitat and movement;
- ridgetop destruction;
- 150 acres of deforestation contributing to climate change;
- not enough wind at the proposed site to support an industrial facility;
- no independent analysis of Apex's claims;
- no compensation to landowners harmed by such an industrial installation;
- and every taxpayer contributing to this assault whether we want it or not;

Meanwhile, our political leadership supports this suspect and risky venture.

Wind energy may have something to offer in helping to combat climate change, but it needs a flat site with reliable winds to do so. North Mountain has neither. Further, the benefit/cost ratio here does not work. Just as solar arrays would not be built in a hollow, wind turbines have no place on steep mountain ridges.

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