

Summary of Adverse Environmental Impacts Caused by Industrial Wind Turbines

1. Noise-induced sleep deprivation and other human health issues.

- Mars Hill, Maine: affidavit of M. A. Nissenbaum M. D. reporting that a majority of neighbors (2300' to 3400' from GE 1.5MW IWT) having sleep issues 5 to 7 times each week. Other health issues included migraines, hypertension, dizziness, tinnitus, and chest pulsations. The health issues were described by the doctor as "prevalent" and "alarming".
- Second International Meeting on Wind Turbine Noise, Lyon France, 9-20-07. Serious noise issues were experienced at a home 3,069' from a wind turbine. Home was inhabitable due to the noise and was subsequently abandoned by the owners.
- World Health Organization Noise Guidelines: sound levels at night at residences should not exceed 30 dBA (compared to the 53 dBA measured at Mars Hill by the Maine Department of Environmental Protections, and the 50 dBA demanded by Ecogen).
- 2009 Minnesota Department of Health Study: sleeplessness and headaches were the most common complaints from people in the proximity of the industrial wind project.
- Thor Vandehei, Ph.D., 7-11-09 submission. Industrial wind turbines are known to produce impulsive noise that is both disturbing and stressful. U.S. EPA states that even mild impulsive noise can awaken sleepers. Also referenced a case in Lincolnshire U.K. Fens wind farm where impulsive noise caused serious sleep interference at a home 3,000' from the nearest IWT.
- VanDenBerg reported serious noise impact at a residence 7,500' from nearest IWT.
- Cohocton resident (J. Hall) reported serious sleep disturbance and deprivation at a residence 4,000' from a turbine. Another Cohocton resident (J. Graham) reported similar experience at their home, and also reported the onset of migraines within weeks of the start-up of the facility.
- Cohocton Supervisor Jack Zigenfus wrote to First Wind with a complaint about noise problems at numerous Cohocton homes.
- Recent IWT Setback standards: Health Ministry of Ontario at 4,900' and the French National Academy of Medicine at 1.5 miles.

Given all of the above it is reasonable to conclude that a minimum setback of approximately 5,000 feet or more is required to reduce the impulsive noise levels at

nearby properties. Furthermore, to avoid what amounts to an “illegal taking”, setbacks should be to property lines, not existing residences. Such a setback, necessary to protect human health and safety, makes it physically impractical to site a IWT facility in the town.

2. Impact on Property Values

- Conclusions of 2009 Wind Turbine Impact Study – Wisconsin:

“Sales within the wind turbine influence are sold for less than those outside the area. There are substantially fewer sales available within the turbine influence area, and the impact of the wind turbines decreased the land values from -14% to -47% with an average loss of -30%.”
- Residents of Mars Hill Maine have reported that residences impacted by turbine noise cannot be sold.
- Realtor Michael Keenan of Naples NY has reported that the prospect of wind development in Italy has resulted in numerous lost property sales.
- Realtor Russell Bounds of Garret County Maryland has testified that rural properties with turbines proposed in a “heritage viewshed” become unsaleable, regardless of the distance between the parcel and the proposed IWT. According to Bounds the impact of proposed IWT’s can stretch more than 7 miles.
- Similar erosion of property values has been reported at wind projects in a number of European countries including UK, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands.

In addition to the facts presented above, it is also quite intuitive that IWT’s would reduce property values as they take away the primary assets of rural land: natural beauty and tranquility. The staggering loss in property value caused by a 2,000 acre WEIZ would result in an immediate rise in the tax rates and an extremely painful tax burden for those property owners that were not themselves directly impacted.

3. Economic Development

- Tourism is the lifeblood of the economy in the Finger Lakes region. As noted in the Comprehensive Plan, the town has a richness of natural resources and recreational opportunities. Unfortunately, the town has very little infrastructure (e.g. lodging, dining, specialty retail) to support increasing the value of tourism in the town. Infrastructure that the Zoning Commission believed to be appropriate included bed and breakfasts,

hostels, campgrounds, gunsmithing, guiding, horseback riding, and retail outlets. Implementing the Zoning Commission's recommendations makes good sense, as they would lead to sustainable economic growth. However, studies from a number of states and countries have concluded that rural tourism and IWT projects are not compatible. Tourists in rural areas have chosen to recreate in areas of natural beauty and serenity. They may not choose to visit an area visually dominated by IWT's or stay over night when you might not sleep due to turbine noise.

- Net positive emigration. In 1960, there were only two residences on Parish Hill. Anne Parker lived on lower Parish Hill Road and the Whalen family had a dairy farm on Shay Road. Today there are more than 25 full-time residences on the hill. The newer arrivals did not move here because it is convenient or close to work. Rather, they traded the amenities of urban and suburban areas to live in a beautiful and natural setting, free of commercial and industrial development. The presence of an industrial wind development in Italy would impact on this positive emigration that has added millions of dollars to our tax rolls.

My overall and clear conclusion from the review of all submitted documents is that large-scale industrial wind projects cause serious environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated and that it is not in the best interest of the people of the town to enable their construction.

In addition, the values, vision, and desires of the people of Italy, as reflected in two census surveys and numerous Public Hearings, support the prohibition against large-scale industrial and commercial development. This fundamental concept forms the core of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. It is a concept so deeply held within the culture of our people that it ought not be open to negotiation.

I therefore support the restoration of the prior Comprehensive Plan and Zoning.

Brad Jones
Supervisor, Town of Italy NY
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