

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL**

**Petition of BNE Energy Inc. for a
Declaratory Ruling for the Location,
Construction and Operation of a 3.2 MW
Wind Renewable Generating Project on
New Haven Road in Prospect, Connecticut**

Docket/Petition No. 980

February 14, 2011

Prefiled Testimony of Josh Walker

- 1. Please state your name and address for the record.**

My name is Josh Walker. I live at 29 Lee Road, Prospect, Connecticut.

- 2. Where is your home located in relation to the proposed site of the industrial wind turbines?**

My home is located approximately 2,200 feet east of the proposed south industrial wind turbine tower.

- 3. What is your occupation?**

I am a project manager for a construction management firm, working primarily with the construction of academic buildings. Our company has a particular focus on building environmentally friendly, "green" buildings.

- 4. How long have you lived in Prospect and why did you move here?**

I have lived at my home on Lee Road for just over a year and a half. I previously lived in Boston for eight years. My wife and I moved to Prospect because we were tired of the noise and stress of city life and wanted to be closer to family. We paid \$285,000 for our home and have a mortgage of \$275,000. This is my first home and by far the most significant financial investment I

have ever made.

I grew up in rural Granby, Connecticut which is about an hour north of Prospect. After high school I moved to Boston to attend Tufts University, and graduated magnum cum laude with a degree in Mathematics and Archeology in 2006.

In 2008 I married my high school sweetheart and the love of my life. A year later we put our life savings into our first home in Prospect. We wanted our home to be in rural Connecticut, where we could enjoy the peace, tranquility, and small town values that we grew up with. We also wanted to be close to our families who have both given us the opportunity to succeed. My wife is now 5 months pregnant with our first child, a girl we are going to name Avery Rose.

I have a job at a construction management firm, she as an ER nurse. While we both work extremely hard at our jobs and we get immense satisfaction from the fruits of our labor. Our lives have been filled with watching our family and friends get married and have kids, and I have experienced more happiness than I could have ever imagined. In short, we have been living the American dream. That is, until this past November, when I first heard of the proposed industrial wind turbines.

5. Do you have knowledge and experience with green energy and technology issues?

Yes. I am a big proponent of responsible green energy and technology. After beginning work in construction management, I voluntarily studied for and passed the test for LEED accreditation. For those who are unaware, LEED is an acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a system set up by the U.S. Green Building Council. Its purpose is to make standards to determine how environmentally friendly the construction project and end product are. But LEED does not just cover the environmental factors of building. Many of the

LEED standards address the health of people that occupy these buildings, from air quality to sunlight exposure. Some of the air quality standards inevitably result in increased energy use, but are part of the standards nonetheless. LEED is a perfect example that the green initiative should be responsible for balancing environmental consciousness with human wellness.

6. Do you have any personal experience with respect to wind energy?

Yes. I visited the industrial wind turbine facility in Falmouth, Mass. From my experience in observing the industrial wind turbines in Falmouth, it is clear to me that the site proposed by BNE energy in Prospect is entirely inappropriate. I observed the turbines in Falmouth from a distance of approximately one-half of a mile. There was a constant, loud whooshing sound that would modulate as the blades passed the tower. It was comparable to the sound of a jet airplane overhead, with the difference that the sound that did not stop.

7. Why did you come before the Siting Council to testify concerning this application?

I believe that Petition #980 utterly fails to balance the benefits claimed by the developer against the devastating impact that the turbines will have on the surrounding homes. If anything comparable to the noise that I observed in Falmouth was a constant presence in my home and yard, which is less than a half-mile from the proposed site of the south turbine, it would destroy the peaceable enjoyment of my home. It would be an intolerable invasion of my property and interference with my pre-existing property rights.

My family and I will also be exposed to disturbing shadow-flicker in my home and yard. According to BNE's own study of this subject, we will experience shadow flicker at sunrise and sunset, particularly on sunny days in the summer, when we should be allowed to enjoy the outdoors at our home.

There is no mention in BNE's Petition of considering a real estate value impact, of addressing any type of blade break or fire that could endanger us, or even a simple maintenance plan. The impact of shadow flicker had to be ascertained through an interrogatory. There is only one area that vaguely states some outreach to the town, but we all know that the everyday Prospect citizen was unaware of the project until just before the petition filing. And yet despite this abundant irresponsibility to the lives of hundreds of people, there is nothing stopping these turbines except for my last line of governmental defense, the Siting Council.

I believe that my American dream is now in jeopardy. I am in the fight of my life, to protect my family and my home. While I will do everything in my power to protect them, only this Siting Council can save us. The proposed turbines have the potential to wipe out everything that we have worked so hard for. My neighborhood will experience a real health and safety risk. My house could become unsalable. I believe the Council is aware of all of the negative impacts I face. How am I supposed to explain to my daughter that I have failed to give her a peaceful childhood that was given to me? And the truly sad reality is that some of my neighbors would look at me with envy, because they would be closer to the turbines and their problems would be worse than mine.

The law as it stands has kicked open the gates to the farm and let the wolves in. These wolves are dressed as sheep, lulling everyone into a false sense of security. But they are wolves nonetheless. The sheep skin they wear is wind energy. It is designed to make everyone feel good about what is happening and ignore the claws and teeth that are hidden underneath.

Let me tell you what has been sacrificed by me so far because my government has utterly failed to protect me. For the past 3 months, nearly all the peace and tranquility that I have worked

so far has been taken from me. I have worked 2 jobs, my normal job during the day and desperately defending my home from this atrocity at night and on the weekends. I have spent money on legal fees and marketing campaigns. We have to pay for expert testimony. This is money that I cannot afford with a child on the way. And what do I stand to gain by these sacrifices? Nothing, except to stay at the status quo. This is the same story for most of my neighbors.

Turbines are in Connecticut's future, and rightly so. But how they are balanced with fundamental rights of its citizens starts right here with this project. Every other future wind project in the state will be compared to this petition. The standard we set must tell everyone that, while wind energy is important, it cannot force people to sacrifice their lives and homes. And let there be no doubt, if this, the first wind project in the State of Connecticut, is sited in a wholly inappropriate location such as the site proposed in Petition 980, the negative impacts will be as devastating to the cause of wind energy as they will be to me and my family.