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re: Draft Wind Turbine Regulations pursuant to Public Act 11-245

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The greatest environmental threat facing life on this planet is global warming. The scientific community is virtually unanimous on this. The implications of rising temperatures on this planet are well documented. It is imperative, actually mandatory, that we significantly reduce the release of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere by sharply reducing burning of fossil fuels. The recent severe weather seen in Connecticut (high temperatures, strong storms, flooding from excessive rain) and across the country (droughts, tornados) tell us the effects of global warming are just beginning.

Our children and grandchildren face life on a very changed planet, with higher temperatures, crop dislocations, sea level rise and a disappearing coastline, flooding, droughts and severe weather events.

Meeting our energy needs through renewable sources is the way to minimize the effects we are already starting to see. In parallel, we focus on companion strategies such as energy efficiency, raising automobile mileage standards and reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), increasing reliance on mass transit, transit oriented development, smart growth and urban infill, and even promoting use of clotheslines instead of power hungry dryers.

Any other benefits to kicking the fossil fuel habit? How about less air pollution from power plants? That means better health for all of us: decreased asthma, respiratory disease, and heart attacks. Increased national security from not sending petrodollars to people who don't like us, but are happy to take billions of our dollars. Avoiding groundwater poisoning and other collateral damage from fracking for natural gas. Avoiding environmental nightmares from pipeline ruptures and oil spills.

Yes, rural visual sightlines and historic preservation are important. Honor them to the extent we can. But don't emulate the Hamden Town Council which ordered single pane windows for our town hall renovation because that's what was on the original building 80 years ago!

The health and comfort of abutters is important. Take into account their concerns, but make sure they are legitimate, and based on sound and unbiased science.

In the past few years, we have made a commitment to this oil reduction in many ways. We as a state have pledged to increase our reliance on renewable energy sources through adoption of a Renewable Portfolio Standard. Our RPS is modest, many feel too modest, yet the 2012 Integrated Resource Plan for Connecticut, just published, says that in just a few years we will not be able to meet even this RPS commitment for energy from in state Class I sources without long term commitments to wind projects which these regulations will enable.

We don't have many choices in Connecticut: solar and onshore wind are two we can focus on. There is a consensus that we will not see off shore wind turbines in Long Island Sound. Other strategies offer some renewable generation, but not much. In state hydro power is limited because our geography is too flat. A head (height of the dam) of only a few feet for a hydro dam doesn't produce much energy. Many locations in the state don't offer much wind.

The Connecticut Legislature has spoken, via PA 11-245. We will have onshore wind turbines installed in the state, subject to appropriate regulations. The state needs to generate as much renewable energy as we can, and we need to maximize in-state generation rather sending our money out of state to pay for renewable energy produced elsewhere. This is what we face. We are not overflowing with energy production and resources, so we need to make do with what we have available. Solar and wind are our best opportunities.

So we look to the Siting Council for regulations which will maximize the opportunities. We need regulations for onshore wind which will encourage installation of turbines. This is not to say we should ignore those nearby residents who may be impacted. The regs must be a good balance between the need for these installations and the legitimate concerns of neighbors. Listen to their concerns, and look at the evidence they present to decide whether they have scientific merit.

Listen to demands from people to weaken the regs, listen to their reasons, but be wary of allowing NIMBY concerns to rule. We don't mean to be disrespectful of our neighbors, but the planet is facing an environmental crisis which will play out in our children's lifetime, and we owe it to them to do our very, very best to minimize the impact. Let's get our priorities in order.

These regulations are in accord with the intent of the legislature, and should be adopted.

Did I remember to mention global warming?

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