

Advocates urge county to accept Community Energy's offer for payment in lieu of taxes

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HERKIMER - Armed with books, studies, facts and figures, several proponents of windmill projects addressed members of the county legislature during last night's meeting.

Fairfield resident Dennis Kaczeroski urged the county to accept Community Energy's reported offer of \$7,500 per megawatt for the 136-megawatt Jordanville Wind Farm for a payment in lieu of taxes agreement. The money would be split among the taxing entities involved - the county, the towns, and school district. The county has been seeking a higher figure, based on a consultant's estimate of \$40,000 per megawatt that they said the county should be able to expect.

"Get what you can get; the market is the market. Don't be short-sighted and derail this," said Kaczeroski. "Your responsibility is to get the best deal for all of us."

Kaczeroski said if the price isn't right, Community Energy would be more than willing to move along to one of the many areas who want windmill projects.

"\$12,000 (the county's recent offer per megawatt) will kill the deal," said Kaczeroski. "They have a lot of places they can go."

Member of the Friends of Renewable Energy, a recently formed Jordanville-based group, also spoke last night, touting the benefits of wind energy and the fact Herkimer County stands to become a leader in the field of renewable energy. Group member Shirley Mower said Community Energy's offer for a PILOT agreement was "reasonable."

"This is an opportunity that comes along once in a generation. Let's not kill the golden goose before she lays her golden egg," remarked Mower.

Mower added that about 75 percent of the land in the Jordanville project area is run by active farmers or is rented by active farmers, giving farmers an economic boost while having a minimal impact on the landscape.

"Unlike projects in other states, this one would preserve large areas of open land at no cost to taxpayers," said Mower.

Town of Stark resident Janice Whipple, a retired hydrogeologist, added that windmills represent an environmentally-friendly source of energy. Whipple laid several books on renewable energy out on the table near the speaker's lectern.