

# THE EVENING TELEGRAM

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## County legislators hear views on windmills

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Proponents and opponents of the three proposed wind farm projects squared off at a public hearing at the Herkimer County Community College Monday. Herkimer County Legislature Finance Committee members listened and took notes as one by one county residents expressed their views about the proposed projects.

Residents who wanted the county to continue to encourage wind energy companies to build wind farms in Herkimer County said the towns, villages, schools and county could reap huge benefits in the form of taxes.

"I'm fully in support (of the windmill project)," said Brendan Woodruff, a Jarvis Junior-Senior High School graduate and freshman at Union College. "You have to think about the future of the area. Our economy stands to gain a lot."

Woodruff said he believed that wind farms will spur growth.

Opponents of the windmill projects doubt entities such as schools, villages, towns



Telegram photo/Jennifer Jones

**LISTENING TO RESIDENTS** — Herkimer County Legislature Finance Committee members held a public hearing on windmills at Herkimer County Community College Monday. County officials sat on stage, listened and took notes as county residents spoke of why they were for or against the proposed windmills projects. From left are County Administrator James Wallace, Raymond Smith, R-Dolgeville, Legislature Chairman Leonard Hendrix, R-Ilion, Vincent Bono, R-Frankfort, and County Attorney Robert Malone.

and the county will see enough money from wind farms to make them an asset.

One man, who said he was a realtor, told the members of the county Legislature's

finance committee that what might look good today could be bad news tomorrow. "I think what you'll find is that windmills prohibit growth," the man said. "Down the road, we'll probably lose

money." Proponents of the windmills stressed the environmental and security benefits wind farms will have on the area. Some who chose to speak at the public hearing

explained that wind power is a renewable energy source. It doesn't require the use of oil and doesn't pose security risks for the country.

"Today we are importing 50 percent of our food. We're importing 60 percent of our energy. What's going to happen when one of those countries gets mad at us and cuts off our food supply?" asked Fairfield planning board member Fred Shaw. "We better start looking at reality. What keeps us protected? What keeps us alive? That's food, water and energy."

One county resident said relying on coal for a source of energy has a harmful effect on people's health, resulting in problems such as asthma.

Opponents claim that wind power companies are misleading the towns and residents by claiming that wind power is environmentally better.

Another county resident, Andy McEvoy said there is noise and light pollution from the wind farms. He said from his property that he can see the lights from the wind farm in Lowville, which is 50 to 60 miles away. McEvoy said that the wind turbines produce 50 decibels of noise which is akin to the sound of a running

refrigerator or dishwasher.

"Who could sleep with that?" he asked the nearly filled room of concerned county residents.

McEvoy explained that wind farms need a diesel generator as backup in case there isn't enough wind. He claimed that 60 percent of all oil is used for transportation. Only 3 percent is used for electricity.

"I would like the county to put a ban on windmills," McEvoy said.

The county Legislature Finance Committee Chairman Dennis Kerco, R-Mohawk, said all of the comments would be made available to all members of the legislature and from there the legislature would take action.

Town officials aren't waiting for the county. The Stark town board recently adopted a law amending land use regulations, within the town in order to provide additional regulations concerning windmills, which sets procedures for landowners to apply to have the structures built on their property, and also establishes restrictions regarding the placement of wind turbines near homes and noise regulation.