

SEIS released for wind project in Jordanville Vol. 108 - Issue 47, 11/23/2006

by Janine Giordano - Richfield Springs Mercury

The Supplement to the Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Jordanville Wind Farm was released last week, with both proponents and opponents jockeying for position in the ongoing battle regarding Community Energy's proposal.

While the document provides additional information for areas of concern with the project, particularly the wetlands delineation study and groundwater study, opponents are saying the document is premature as testing has not been completed.

"I think its release is premature, as I believe they are still drilling," said Sue Brander, member of Advocates for Stark and a vocal opponent of the project. "Also, the (Department of Environmental Conservation) recommended dye tests in relation to water flow in the area and bedrock fractures and sink holes," which she said have not been completed. "I think this was being driven by corporate deadlines, rather than doing a thorough job."

Members of a newly formed group, Friends of Renewable Energy (FORE), are supporting the wind project, and have launched a campaign to provide a voice for proponents of wind energy, particularly area projects.

One member, John Forrest, has so taken the issue to heart that he has written poetry about wind energy, turbines, and the ongoing war among residents. "I wrote it because I think we should remain positive about wind energy. I have nothing personally to gain, monetarily. But I have everything to gain with the quality of life wind energy will bring," Forrest said.

Brander was concerned with the formation of the new group, saying, "It sounds like a lobbying organization to me. They're going across the state holding seminars, usually on college campuses funded by student groups, not faculty. They're telling their views, which are very biased, on wind energy and charging \$5 to join their group. It's a public relations campaign to gather political credibility," she said.

On the other hand, Forrest offered similar disdain for the group calling themselves Advocates for Stark. "I don't know how they can call themselves that. No one voted for them to represent them. One of the elected officials hit the roof when I called him an advocate for Stark."

FORE spokesperson Kay Sheldon Moyer attempted to "set the record straight" with a recent statement supporting wind energy. She said wind energy is the fastest growing electricity source today, growing from 1,000 MW of wind power in 1985 to over 10,000 MW today.

A comparative was also offered, with Sheldon-Moyer noting that it would take burning more than 12 million tons of coal or 40 million barrels of oil each year to generate the 10,000 MW produced today through wind energy.

The SEIS provided the scaled down project with a layout of 68 turbines as opposed to the 75 turbines proposed earlier this year. The SEIS also focuses on the impact of the project historically, culturally and archeologically and provides an expanded visual impact assessment, an ambient sound analysis, community relations plan and decommissioning scope, according to information provided by Community Energy.