

Northport Village Council
116 W. Nagonaba Street
Northport, Michigan 49670

3/1/2012

Subject: Leelanau Community Energy, LLC, commercial wind turbine for Northport sewer plant.

Dear council member,

We strongly feel that commercial wind turbines should not be installed anywhere in Leelanau Township without first adopting a “commercial wind turbine energy ordinance” that addresses **all** issues of concern.

As much as we believe the council acted in good faith concerning this development proposal, we also feel the process was flawed, and that Leelanau Community Energy (LCE, a private business for profit) did not disclose the *net* benefit of their Vestas V20-120kW commercial wind turbine. (You cannot realize the worth of a business by only projecting gross sales). Additionally, this project is yet another component to an existing public service and the taxpayer deserves to know if there truly is a reasonable benefit that *justifies* installing a commercial wind turbine (66ft. blade swept area) on a scenic Northport hill.

Please, stop and consider the following facts:

- * LCE has stated their wind turbine will produce as much as, but not more than, 50% of the electricity for the sewer plant.
- * 50% of the electric for one (1) day equals 465 kW hr., or approximately \$50.00 per day.
- * \$50.00 per day is a gross sales figure without consideration for operating cost (maintenance, refurbishing, insurance, etc.).
- * There are presently 574 Residential Equivalent Units (REU's) in the Sewer Assessment District.
- * \$50.00 divided by 574 REU's = less than nine (9) cents **gross** benefit per REU per day, minus operational cost, refurbishing, etc..
- * The 9 cent daily gross benefit (per REU) starts in year 12 (13 or 14 ?) but it is only **2 tenths (.02)** of a cent benefit (per REU) in years 1-12.

Is this the “nice deal for the village” that Mr. Lang recently expressed? Is this the “monies that will come to Northport” that Mr. Mikesell spoke of? One thing for sure is that **no** wind turbine will be “FREE” as Mr. Collins has stated this one will be. “There is no free lunch”. Why didn't LCE disclose the net benefit? Why would the village ever want to “take over” such a costly and risky responsibility for so little gain? “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof”.

Environmental concerns / Endangered Species:

Has there been consideration for harm to wildlife?

If constructed, this wind turbine (blade swept area 66 ft.) will use the same air space as our resident breeding eagles, our national bird. There is at least two breeding pair of Bald Eagles within four miles of the proposed wind turbine site. The U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife recommends that commercial wind turbines be installed outside of the "home range" of a breeding pair and not closer than three (3) miles from the shoreline. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act protects these majestic birds and will bring penalty charges against anyone for killing ("taking") one of these birds. How would you feel if this wind turbine were to kill one of our local nesting eagles? Additionally, the Northport area is a designated "sensitive area" for these birds, and a Raptor Migration Flyway. The Centerville Township Commercial Wind Turbine Ordinance adopted a five (5) mile setback from any known eagles nest. We should respectfully do the same.

Master Plan / Northport Land Use Plan objectives:

The planners and elected officials of our community are obligated to use our master plan as a guide for appropriate development. Attached to this letter is a page from the Northport Land Use Plan that explains how to treat "Public and Environmentally Sensitive Lands" regarding development. It states, "development is undesirable"... on "scenic views", etc. The proposed site is one of our primary "scenic views" and our living greeting card from beautiful Northport Bay.

With consideration for the lack of a Commercial Wind Ordinance, the risk to the taxpayer and the environment, compared to such a small amount of benefit, should the objectives of our Master Plan be compromised to allow this development?

We encourage the Northport Village Council to make a motion to terminate the site lease agreement for reasons stated in this letter, and because LCE has not fully met the required obligations stated in the site lease agreement.

Sincerely,

David C. Brigham, Leelanau Forum

cc. Northport Planning Commission

Leelanau County Board of Commissioners

U.S. Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

Leelanau Enterprise. Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council