

## THE PUBLIC SPEAKS (OR AT LEAST SOME OF IT)

### ***Editor's Note: When the Conservancy***

*announced its opposition to windmills on Rich Mountain, Board member Julian Martin used e-mail to send a press release to a long list of people who have expressed some interest in being kept informed of environmental news. The list includes both members and non-members of the Conservancy. These are some of the responses he received from people on that list.*

Hello, I would like to voice my concern over the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy opposition to the wind power project on the basis of visual impact. First of all let me start by saying that mountain top removal clearly has environmental impacts. Most coal operations and everything associated with them are linked to air and water pollution. I have voiced my concerns through this organization many times on these issues. I was also part of the relief provided during the floods that devastated many families. Much of this devastation was due to the mountain top removal practices.

Although I am not totally familiar with West Virginia's power needs, and how coal is allocated, but if the opposition to mountain top removal succeeds, then wouldn't that leave big gaps in West Virginia's energy production? I know there are safer coal practices, but how about looking at the bigger picture and trying to reduce everything associated with coal production. Wind power would seem to be a clean and environmentally friendly way to achieve this. It is a low impact source of power, a clear energy alternative to coal burning power plants and everything associated with them.

I understand preserving the beautiful views that are associated with mountains. I have kayaked, biked, and hiked in West Virginia for many years and I am concerned with environmental issues that effect this beautiful area.

However, I am also an advocate of wind, solar and other sources of clean environmentally friendly sources of power. We must not forget that we need to promote these clean energy practices if we want to preserve our natural resources. Windmills are much easier on the eye and the environment than a mountain that has been sheared off.

Thank you.

Douglas Miley

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I've been a rabid environmentalist for a half century. I published my first article on the ills of water pollution in 1963. I've risked my career on several occasions to go public with environmental messages. My tree-hugger credentials are impeccable.

We live on a mountaintop in Bartow. Our nearest neighbors are four miles away. We installed a windmill in our back yard that makes much of our power. Snowshoe resort is 15 miles away on the next ridge. The lights of Snowshoe are infinitely more disruptive of the beauty of our home than is the windmill in our back yard. In fact, given the right (or wrong) conditions you can see the light pollution from Snowshoe as far away as a few miles west of Harrisonberg.

Unfortunately, you cannot harvest wind energy without wind turbines. They must be on hilltops. They will be visible from other hilltops. Either one favors alternatives to fossil fuels or one does not. As much as I dislike any disruption of nature, our economy will get our electricity from somewhere. Those who make wind power projects impossible are making mountaintop removal inevitable. It is as simple as that. Please advise folks involved in your policy making of that fact. It might help clear their minds if they realize that they are inadvertently siding with the environmental rapists when they embrace the kind of purist ideology that we all wish were possible but we all should be mature enough to realize is not.

Rich Laska –

Thanks for sending this, Julian. I

wasn't very attuned to the debate over the windmills in the Tucker/Grant co. areas, but over Christmas had the shock of seeing them firsthand. I had no idea of the scale of that project, and would hate to see something similar on Rich Mtn.

Nathan Fetty

I think the Conservancy needs to very carefully consider their opposition to wind power projects. I know it has been the topic of discussion for several months, but no firm stance should be decided on until all considerations are evaluated fully.

I, for one, don't generally mind wind turbines in my viewshed, even though I highly prize scenic and wilderness areas. If these renewable energy sources help prevent some of the danger and destruction caused by other energy sources, I think it is a fair trade-off.

Looking out over a beautiful landscape of hills and forest, interrupted by some wind turbines, is preferable to looking at mountaintop removal sites, nuclear power plants etc.

Keep up your good work, but please

think twice about opposition to

projects devoted to renewable sources of energy.

Thanks for your time.

Geary Weir

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The sight of distance windmills is preferred to the haze generated by coal emissions any day. And the sight of windmills around the world may well be the pearl in the oyster to prevent the melting of the polar ice caps. Windmills smell better, too. No one dies from the air emissions from windmills, and no one dies from the black lung of windmills, windmills don't need mine roofs to fall on anyone, and windmill trucks haven't run over anyone with illegal overweight loads.

Science and technology brought us to the point of disaster with careless energy consumption, and are the only hope to save us from the precipice. The new wind technology is a true success of engineering development. To oppose windmills is to be a stooge for the coal industry. How many relatives and friends have you lost in the mines?

Regards,

M. Weirick

I do not agree with you on your wind

power position. I find them quite elegant and a good solution to environmental and energy challenges. You want to have your cake and to eat it as well.

Robert Neff