

Highlands Conservancy's Letter to Guascor Group

On January 25, 2003, the Board of Directors of the West Virginia Highlands Conservancy voted to publicly oppose the construction of an extensive wind energy facility on Rich Mountain, near Harman, WV. We respectfully suggest that GUASCOR discontinue efforts to develop such a project.

This decision is in line with a policy decided at our October 20, 2002 board meeting: "The Highlands Conservancy does not support permits for wind power projects that would degrade scenic vistas from Canaan Valley, Dolly Sods, Seneca Rocks, Spruce Knob and other special places in West Virginia." The West Virginia Highlands Conservancy is among the state's best-known environmental advocacy organizations. We have a special concern and institutional role in protection of the Monongahela National Forest, which surrounds Rich Mountain. We do our best to take a balanced view regarding wind energy. We applaud its contribution of clean, renewable energy but must also consider issues regarding visual impact, endangered species, and avian impacts.

In this case, our assessment indicates that the impact on the scenic splendors of the Monongahela National Forest, including the Spruce Knob/Seneca Rocks National Recreation Area and two Wilderness Areas, would just be too great. The turbines would be clearly visible from many points on Spruce Mountain, including the observation platform at Spruce Knob. They would also be clearly visible from other special places including Mt. Porte Crayon, Haystack Knob, Shavers Mountain, Middle Mountain, and Roaring Plains, as well as the Gandy Creek, Dry Fork and Laurel Fork Valleys. The changes in vista would be particularly disturbing on clear, star-filled nights, and at sunrise and sunset. In our discussions with other developers, we have sometimes recommended changes to mitigate visual impact while maintaining the main thrust of their projects. Unfortunately, in this case, the impact appears so extensive that we don't think this is possible. We wish you the best of luck in your efforts to develop projects that will contribute to the world's need for renewable energy without degrading the resources we need to protect. Please feel free to contact us at any time for further discussion.

/s/ Peter Shoenfeld
Chair, Wind Energy Subcommittee

Late Breaking Non-News

As of press time, Guascor had not responded to the

Highlands Conservancy's correspondence. Neither had it responded to press inquiries.