

‘Wind must be part of energy mix’?

The tone and substance of your 3/27 editorial ‘Wind must be part of energy mix’ suggests you, as is true of many Vermonters, have been simply co-opted by wind power advocates with little or no homework done on what impact industrial wind power would have on Vermont’s environment, economy and quality of life.

April, 2004 by Hugh Kemper in The Rutland Herald (VT)

The tone and substance of your 3/27 editorial ‘Wind must be part of energy mix’ suggests you, as is true of many Vermonters, have been simply co-opted by wind power advocates with little or no homework done on what impact industrial wind power would have on Vermont’s environment, economy and quality of life. At a minimum, you haven’t done your homework on the proposed Glebe project because, if you had, you would know it is not (as you would say) ‘located at discrete and, one hopes, appropriate locations’. The proposed Glebe project (27 lighted turbines, each 330’-390’ high, sited approximately 500’ apart along 3.5 miles of Glebe’s ridgeline) has been described by noted landscape architect, Jean Vissering, as an ‘in your face’ project that ‘will define the town’. In short, Glebe is not Searsburg.

Your editorial also refers to the recent visit to Vermont of Ross Gelbspan, the well-known author of articles and books on global warming. As written, the casual reader of the editorial might even conclude that Mr. Gelbspan favors the Glebe project. In fact, that’s not the case. In an interview with Robert Smith (‘The Heat is On’, Message for the Week 3/31), Mr. Gelbspan is quoted as saying: “The place where windfarms would have the greatest impact is in the Great Plains area, like North Dakota. My feeling is that the different parts of the country should focus on what would work best in their area. Wind in the Great Plains and Midwest, solar in the South, hydrogen in the Northeast. That way we also diversify and decentralize our energy sources’.

And, finally, whereas you congratulate the House for setting aside legislation that was putting additional roadblocks in front of wind power development in Vermont, you fail to mention that H 767, if enacted, would establish a Commission to ‘study the costs and benefits’ of Glebe type projects to Vermont’s environment, economy and energy needs. The Commission would focus on exactly those issues you dismiss rather cavalierly, i.e. real estate values, tourism, etc. It is my fervent hope that this Commission will conclude that projects like Glebe offer diminutive benefits particularly when compared to the substantial threats posed by such projects to Vermont’s environment, economy and quality-of-life.

Other than the above, your editorial was ‘spot on’