

The following was published as a 'letter to the editor' during May 04 in the Manchester Journal, the Rutland Herald and the Message for the Week.

#### Wind Power- The Battle of Acronyms

Those of us who oppose the indiscriminate construction of wind turbines on Vermont's treasured ridgelines have been called many things of late. Examples include self-serving, myopic, and purveyors of misleading 'facts' and of 'scare tactics'. Some critics have called us the environmentalist's equivalent of the 'n' word, i.e. NIMBY's (not-in-my-backyard). A NIMBY, of course, is the ultimate pejorative as it suggests we're hypocrites, i.e. individuals who are for a 'good thing' in principle (in this instance wind power as a source of clean and renewable energy) but not if it comes to our neighborhood.

In the spirit of a 'fair and balanced' presentation of the wind power debate, I thought it might be helpful to identify the other stakeholders with appropriate acronyms. This way it will be easier for all of us to keep the players straight. While I'm sure you could devise better ones, I've come up with the following- UPOP's, UPOF's, SPOTA's and POCPOL's.

In the context of the wind power debate, UPOP's (unbridled pursuit of profits) are the developers and the landowners. Mind you, I'm not being critical here. This is America and I don't fault anyone for the entrepreneurial pursuit of the bottom-line. However, it is useful to remember that the bottom-line is what drives the developers and the landowners...not their 'sugar coated' reasons (at least in the developer's case) of which the most popular are solving global warming and acid rain.

UPOF's (unbridled pursuit of funding) are an interesting lot. They are fairly easily recognizable. Look for organizations (non-profits, research, think tanks, etc) with 'renewable' either in their name or mission statement. These are the 'independent experts' who write 'authoritative' treatises and who are called upon and largely funded by UPOP's to support their objectives.

Next we have a particularly powerful group that I call the SPOTA's for 'self-righteous pursuit of their agenda'. These are the environmental groups with which we are all familiar. For the most part, these groups began with well-intentioned goals and have, in all fairness, contributed to a more prudent use of environmental resources. Of late, however, they have become in a manner of speaking 'too big for their britches' and, given their considerable financial resources and political clout, pursue their agendas with little, if any, recognition of the legitimate concerns and issues of their opponents.

Finally, we have the POCPOL's which stands for 'pocket-politicians'. These are the politicians who receive substantial financial support from UPOP's and SPOTA's (who also provide political support) and, as such, are in their pockets. This rather unseemly lot abandoned long ago any pretense of a balanced approach to addressing the problems

and issues of importance to their supporters.

Well, there you have it- a convenient nomenclature for the wind power debate. If aggressively used, these acronyms should successfully preclude any real discussion of the issues. For example, call someone who raises concerns about wind power a NIMBY and that should do it! After all, why should a debate ensue over environmental, economic and quality-of-life concerns expressed by somebody who clearly doesn't give a hoot about the rest of us. On the other hand, if one considers that the UPOP's, UPOF's, SPOTA's and POCPOL's kinda out-number the NIMBY's, maybe some might want to take the time to gain a better understanding of an underdog's views.

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