

5/24/06 - NEWS RELEASE – PUBLIC DEBATE ON WIND TURBINES

What: Cohocton Town Meeting – a public hearing with the Cohocton Planning Board

When: May 25, 2006, at 7:00 pm

Where: Wayland-Cohocton Elementary School, 30 Park Ave., Cohocton, NY 14826

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www.cohoctonfree.com

www.cohoctonwatch.org

The Issue:

For the past 3 years an international wind industry group based in New England, [UPC Wind](#) and its subsidiaries, has been quietly working in Steuben County to solicit support from individual landowners and Town officials for the development of a large wind power installation on the hills of Cohocton and Prattsburg. Other groups have been working similarly in various towns throughout the Finger Lakes with plans that could eventually blanket all its hills with more than 1600 wind turbines, forever changing the character of this scenic region.

Most residents in the Cohocton area were unaware of these controversial plans until they received a [letter](#) from the developer in mid-April outlining [the project](#) as a virtual fait accompli. If successful, UPC Wind intends to establish a \$125 million industrial wind power plant in Cohocton in 2007 consisting of upwards of 44 massive wind turbine units, each over 400' high, weighing over 280 tons, and propelling a loud bus-sized 2.0 MW turbine generator. A similar plan with over 100 turbine units has been proposed for the nearby Town of Prattsburg.

Landowners who have signed leases supporting the project and Town officials have been promised unreported sums of money in return for their cooperation, but those living on neighboring properties and within its broad viewshed who would be most impacted by the project have not been consulted until now. This Town Meeting has been put forward as the first and last official public hearing on the matter before the Cohocton Planning Board, which has been designated the Lead Agency for the project, votes next month to approve and issue building permits. Citizens, over 200 of whom attended an impromptu informational meeting last week, have become remarkably energized and are expected to turn out in large numbers on May 25 to express their reservations, concerns, and opposition to the project.

This event is newsworthy in that it is one of the first major encounters in what promises to be a strenuous struggle between aggressive and well-funded wind power developers, encouraged by Albany with “green power” tax incentives, and residents in the Finger Lakes. The social and legal precedent that becomes established in Cohocton may define the course of events in neighboring counties for generations to come.