

# Because You are "Green" Doesn't Mean You Have to Love Wind Farms

Industrial wind farms, like the Cape Wind project, are on the rise and along with them public protest and opposition. Is it anti-environmental to even question much less object? Not at all. In fact, questioning wind power does not mean anti-environment and in fact the opposite is most often the case. Those that question are those that care or they wouldn't be involved in the debate at all.

In fact, being Green means you should question not only the viability of wind power but its potential negative impacts on the Earth, its communities and the living beings and ecosystems on which it depends.



## **Making responsible and informed choices are the keys to living Green.**

But in today's political environment that often means questioning and questioning is often met with ridicule and attack. However, fighting the good fight has always been met with attack.

Take the war in Iraq, for example. To even question it, much less oppose it, holds you up to attack. Any opposition or skepticism is met with the label, Un-American. But how can that be? This country was founded on freedom and the ability of people to openly question the government.

Alternative energy seems to have come down to one choice, wind power. And to question it is called anti-environment or pro-pollution, as in fossil fuels. But, what sense does that make?

Questioning wind power does not mean anti-environment and in fact the opposite is most often the case. Those that question are those that care or they wouldn't be in the debate at all.

Because we are offered one choice by one industry does not mean we need to accept it as the only choice. There are many other alternatives in the works that could prove much less harmful to the living environment. Conservation is a start that will buy us the needed time to come up with real viable alternatives already in the works like the Hydrogen Economy, for instance, based on biomass.

Of course, conservation doesn't make anyone rich so it is mostly disregarded as too simple. Often, the real common sense solutions, that people can actually do themselves, are. Except, of course, in the past when American's were asked to conserve and make due during times of war and economic crisis. (Sound familiar?) And they obliged. Why aren't we being asked, even made, to conserve? Why are we only being asked to support more and more industry, to buy more and more gas guzzling vehicles and to go further and further into debt?

But, industry, least we forget, is about profit not altruism and human values. While industry has done a good job of masking its motives through marketing, let's not forget just who these companies are.

An example is GE who has managed to change its public image from a polluting industry to a green one simply through marketing itself as Green. While it manufactures wind turbines and markets itself in its eco-imagination campaign, as a forward thinking green hero, it also is responsible for polluting our skies and waterways.

This company dumped pollutants like PCBs into the Hudson River for years and when it was caught launched an enormous well funded public relations campaign using beautiful images of the river, birds and estuaries, that hood-winked a majority of public into thinking GE was responsible for the very health and life of the Hudson River, not its slow death. In fact, people like Pete Seeger, though his activism for the Hudson River among other environmental warriors like the Hudson Riverkeeper were the ones that protected it, cleaned it up and called GE to task.

### **Behind every industrial wind farm is a developer looking to profit, Big.**

What is wrong with that? Nothing. Except, of course, when you take a good look at the sales end of things. Most wind farm sales are based on marketing a product to cure all ills and as we all know marketing is often less than honest.

Years ago, we had the snake oil salesmen who would blow into town, offering their product guaranteed to cure all ills. By the time people realized they had been duped, the snake-oil salesman was long gone and off to his next mark.

What does snake oil have to do with industrial wind farms?

Everything. Just as snake oil salesmen promised to cure society's ills with a tonic, the wind power industry does the same with a wind farm. It promises, not only, to produce clean renewable energy at a lower cost, it also promises to lessen our dependence on foreign oil which will save our soldiers lives, our own, stop pollution, save the environment and cure Global Warming!

### **Buyer Beware. When something sounds too good to be true, it most often is.**

In Wendy Williams and Robert Whitcomb's book, "Cape Wind", the authors attack the local citizen's opposition mercilessly as rich NIMBY's who only care about their view. Never mind that the Cape is one of the poorest county's in MA with people from all walks of life struggling to make ends meet in a community dependant on fishing and Summer tourism to survive and, of course, the service industries needed to back them up.

But beyond that, and probably most galling to the authors and Cape Wind project, not one senator or congressman nor one town, on the Cape, has endorsed the project. This, of course, is written off with the implication that they have all been bought by the wealthy. However, the writers will not come right out and say it. Why? Because these public officials represent the views of those that elected them, the towns themselves and the People of Cape Cod and the Islands.

Are there wealthy people on the Cape? Yes. And perhaps even more galling than the politicians not in favor of Cape Wind, those people have been willing to fund a not for profit organization, the Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound, that opposes the project.

Ask yourself, when was the last time any local community won in opposition to a developer without the funding to do it? Can't think of one? That is not surprising. Developers count on their ability to out-

spend any opposition. But this time they ran into a group of committed people who have put millions of dollars into trying to stop them. Fair is fair.

In contrast we have another project proposed by the developers of Cape Wind, the Chelsea Diesel Power Plant (a fossil fuel burning polluting power plant proposed by that same clean green power group, how ironic but how telling) where the local opposition is simply being railroaded by the developer because they have no real funding to stop it.

### **When did NIMBY become a bad word?**

How can anyone oppose anything without being labeled NIMBY, as a bad thing? Funny how spin works, it takes a virtue, protecting your own and turns it into a vice, selfishness. And it attempts to boil down valid opposition into sound bites of the ridiculous.

An editorial under Cheers & Jeers, in the Cape Cod Times, May 18, 2007, talks about the complexity of the issues:

#### *Intellectual laziness*

*"When we hear Sen. Edward Kennedy's well-reasoned arguments against the Cape Wind farm reduced to the aesthetics issue, we ask ourselves: What is it about society today that more and more people are reducing complex issues to the simplest possible terms?"*

*Other promoters of the wind farm are minimalizing this complex public policy debate, with a million different arguments both pro and con, to a simple case of NIMBYism.*

*Kennedy, who has promoted Nantucket Sound as a national marine sanctuary since at least 1980, is advocating for a comprehensive national policy on the siting of offshore wind farms.*

*Do people no longer have the time to understand the complicated details, nuances, gray areas that play a part in nearly every important topic of our day?"*

But back to the democratic process and the idea that we should not question, much less object and oppose, if we dare, an industrial wind power plant in our back, or should I say front, yard.

### **Hijacking the democratic process to sell a product.**

Wendy Williams writes: "We need a serious and responsible conversation about the future of energy in America. As we have it, we cannot allow the public discussion to be hijacked by those with hidden agendas. There's simply too much at stake."

This writer couldn't agree with her more but, ironically, her book attempts to hijack public discussion with her hidden agenda, to promote Cape Wind.

If the authors of "Cape Wind" truly want a serious and responsible conversation about the future of energy in America they will have to listen to all sides, take them into account, present them in an honest and unbiased fashion and stop attempting to silence valid public concerns with ridicule and spin.

That is democratic.