



Corning, NY – May 9, 2008

## Opponents demand investigation into wind farms

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*By Mary Perham*

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Bath, N.Y. - Wind farm opponents have called on Steuben County District Attorney John Tunney to investigate their wide-ranging allegations against a county agency, municipalities and individual officials.

In a May 5 letter to Tunney, Cohocton Wind Watch's chief spokesman James Hall demanded an investigation into what he feels are alleged criminal actions. Those include false claims, filing false instruments, bribery of public officials, larceny and fraud.

Those accused of illegal actions are: the Steuben County Industrial Development Agency, SCIDA Executive Director James Sherron, town and planning board members in several towns including Cohocton and Prattsburgh, and wind developers EcoGen and First Wind (formerly UPC).

Construction of roughly 50 turbines in Cohocton by First Wind began last fall. First Wind also has plans for a 36-turbine project in Prattsburgh and Naples.

EcoGen's initial plans for a 50-turbine farm in Prattsburgh were approved two years ago by SCIDA, but the developer has taken no further public action since then.

Allegations by Cohocton Wind Watch against include:

- The wind developers knowingly provided and submitted false statements and false instruments for permits and during environmental studies.
- The developers have improperly influenced public officials through cash bribes, lucrative lease terms, bogus real estate transactions, purchase of personal property, and contingent real estate purchase offers.
- Developers seeking leases for wind turbine sites or easements for access roads and transmission lines have lied to convince landowners to sign away their rights.
- Numerous allegations of fraud by governmental officials, developers and consultants.
- Unlawful conduct by Prattsburgh Supervisor Harold McConnell in voting for an eminent domain resolution by the Prattsburgh Town Board last month. If carried out, the resolution would allow the town to seize privately owned property in order to bury transmission cables.

McConnell publicly admitted at the April 21 board meeting he set up an unpaid real estate transaction for UPC/First Wind last year. McConnell told the board he later received payment for the transaction after the town signed an agreement with UPC, adding he had been told by counsel the action would not prevent him from casting the deciding vote for eminent domain.

Sherron returned phone calls from The Leader Thursday but opted not to give a comment. Tunney said he had no comment on the letter.

If Tunney decides to take action, Steuben would be the third county in the state to investigate criminal wrongdoing associated with wind farms.

The Franklin County District Attorney's office is conducting a grand jury investigation into wind farm-related abuses, and Delaware County is also investigating alleged criminal activity.

Representatives from the state Attorney General's Office also reportedly met with wind farm opponents in Steuben County last week.