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Wind power the major issue in event hosted by Reform Cohocton

Trust-buster: Massa vows to go after 'foreign' wind companies, says they're monopolies

By BOB CLARK - STAFF WRITER

COHOCTON - Wind power topped a Reform Cohocton town hall-style forum Tuesday night.

Congressional candidate Eric Massa and Reform Cohocton candidates answered questions from a crowd of more than 60 Cohocton residents at Cohocton Elementary School. Wind power and turbines dominated the meeting, with every candidate and Massa speaking about the issue.

"(Current wind power contracts) constitute a monopoly," Massa, a Democrat, said. "If elected, I will invoke the Sherman Antitrust Law to combat this."

Massa, a critic of international companies developing wind power in the 29th Congressional District, added he felt federal intervention is necessary to stop the takeover of natural resources and the power grid by foreign companies.

Cohocton town board candidate Steve Sick remarked that greed is the motivating factor behind the decisions of property owners signing leases with UPC Wind.

"It's about the money," said Sick, who is running for a seat on the town board. "If (wind turbines) were being put in on eminent domain, every one of these farmers would be screaming bloody murder."

Jim Hall, who organized the event, believes wind power is not the real problem in Cohocton.

"It's not an issue of opposing wind turbines, it's about the way the decisions are made," said Hall.

Hall, as a member of Cohocton Wind Watch, helped file three Article 78 lawsuits against the town board Aug. 31 over several alleged Open Meeting Law and zoning violations. He said all the incumbent officials who are up for re-election were invited to the forum, but none attended.

One official Tuesday afternoon explained why.

"First off, there's normally a mutually agreed upon moderator at such a debate," said town Supervisor Jack Zigenfus.



Congressional candidate Eric Massa delivers closing remarks at the Reform Cohocton-sponsored forum at Cohocton Elementary School Tuesday evening. Massa believes the development of wind power by foreign companies is verging on a monopoly, and has vowed to use the Sherman Antitrust Act against the companies.

Zigenfus also said that the state had set aside Tuesday in remembrance of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and that the primary elections were originally scheduled for Tuesday, but were pushed to Sept. 18.

“They just said, ‘This is the date,’” said Zigenfus.

The moderator at the event was Rachel Treichler, the 2006 Green Party candidate for attorney general. Hornell-based WLEA-AM and WCKR-FM radio station owner Kevin Doran was originally scheduled to moderate the forum, but had to cancel for health reasons.

The reaction of the crowd at the end of the forum was enthusiastic, with applause for all the candidates.

“We hope the voters recognize a real alternative (to incumbents), which they haven't had in this town in quite a while,” Hall said.

Primary day is Sept. 18, and the general election is Nov. 6.