



## Turbine Town

The Statue of Liberty represents the triumph of democratic society over tyranny and corruption. As a New York Harbor tugboat pilot I am almost always in the presence of this great American symbol of freedom and democracy. But lately it's the site of this beautiful statue that reminds me of the failed democratic system of government in my hometown and the distressing divisions among residents of this community 300 miles away.

I moved to Cohocton in 2004 after building my dream house high atop Dutch Hill. Construction started in January and by September the log cabin and barn were finished and my new 1/2-acre pond was slowly filling. Years of financial planning were finally paying off and I couldn't have been more proud of my accomplishment. I chose Cohocton for the same reasons most people would, the beautiful unspoiled viewsheds, the friendly small town atmosphere and those unbelievably silent star filled night skies.

About three years ago an international company called UPC Wind quietly and stealthily slipped into Cohocton and began work on what could be the largest industrial wind turbine project in this region. After years of clandestinely working behind the scenes with town officials and a small group of landholders, the project that has bitterly divided this town was announced to the public in April 2006. The news came in the form of a "we're going to make good neighbors" letter from UPC's Chris Swartley. About this time my neighbor approached me with even more good news, he had signed a lease agreement with UPC and Dutch Hill was about to be transformed into an industrial electrical generating facility with the addition of 16, 420 ft. noise producing, sun shadow flickering, ice throwing, strobe lighted, property value reducing "GOOD NEIGHBORS", the goliath C96 turbines. These monsters will be the biggest in the country with the closest sited 1,500 feet from my house. I was also told in no uncertain terms that nothing could prevent this project from being built, so just accept it. My initial reaction was pretty muted and right in line with what the supporters of this project expected. What really energized me was the nasty attitude some of the leaseholders took when I, a non-native, had the audacity to question the conduct of their town government and the placement of turbines in a residential setting. One leaseholder steadfastly insists he can do whatever he wants with his land no matter what the impact on nearby residents or the environment. Bullying and provocative statements like this were all the incentive I needed to begin researching the wind industry. The more I learned the more outraged and outspoken I've become.

Town officials have a duty to ensure the safety and well being of all its residents and yet the Cohocton regime is actively promoting UPC and the industrialization of our town. There are ethical questions concerning a town board that has rejected a petition with 215 signatures representing about a quarter of the total number of Cohocton voters

asking the board to declare a six-month moratorium on wind projects. Board members with close family ties to leaseholders, a senior councilman who has written articles for Yes! Wind Cohocton supporting this project and the chairman of the Planning Board admitting that he is "just doing what he is told". This fascist Cohocton regime will not even open the decision-making process to a referendum of the electorate whereby residents of the town can vote to either permit or prohibit industrial wind turbines.

Wind energy is "green" for those leaseholders who have bought into this scheme with financial gain, but what about the rest of us who have serious reservations about an industry that hedges the truth and answers to no one. Cohocton Windmill Law #2 requires a 520 ft. turbine setback from non-participating landowners' property lines and a 1500 ft. turbine setback from private dwellings. This law, as written, opens up some serious legal issues concerning property rights when the 1500 ft. danger zone overshadows private property. In other words, private zoned land is being overlapped with an industrial influence. About 3 acres of my land will fall inside the 1500 ft. danger zone from Turbine #1. Essentially I have lost my building rights to those 3 acres since no dwelling is allowed inside this zone. Even if I could build inside the danger zone, would an insurance company write a policy on a structure inside the danger zone? Will a bank grant a mortgage under these conditions? There are dozens of non-participating property owners who will be adversely affected by this law! The 1500 ft. setback to a dwelling is much too close for a 420 ft. turbine and will create serious quality of life, health, and safety issues.

Let me be perfectly clear, this project as it is proposed will be less profitable and most likely would be cancelled if the setback distances were increased. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Dutch Hill is available online and at the Town Hall. This voluminous report is incredibly one-sided in UPC's favor – the benefits are repeatedly overstated while the adverse impacts are repeatedly downplayed. And why not? After all, UPC selected and paid the consultants that prepared this report. Excessive health-damaging sound levels are one of the wind industry's biggest problems and dirtiest secrets. How can an engineering firm evaluate the sound power level of the C96 turbine, which is extremely important for determining increased noise levels at nearby homes, when the turbine is still on the drawing board? Not a problem if you work for UPC – just substitute a prototype with a smaller rotor and hope the results are close! (Refer to DEIS 3.7.2.1.) By not waiting to conduct an accurate and comprehensive noise analysis on a functioning commercial version of the C96, and instead relying on data from a smaller experimental turbine, the entire DEIS noise study is corrupted and critically flawed. This inaccuracy will lead to serious errors in delineating setback requirements for turbine siting.

Shadow flicker is the result of the rotor blades chopping the sunlight and causing huge moving shadows. The DEIS report only assumes shadow flicker is a nuisance if it occurs on a home window. The consultant has totally ignored shadow flicker on a residence as a whole property where the effects of these large shadows will be impossible to ignore. Careful study of the DEIS reveals all five homes atop Dutch Hill, including mine, will be exposed to this environmental pollutant one hour per day, 180 days a year. (Refer to DEIS Appendix 1, attachment 1-061025 north.)

On ice throw, "AWS True Wind for a moderate icing location, the maximum achievable distance for ice to be thrown was conservatively considered to be approximately 1150 ft."

(Refer to DEIS Appendix O, part 2.) I would consider Cohocton to be a heavy icing location where 1150 ft. could easily reach 1500 ft. or more. On safety, "Another potential public safety concern is the possibility of a wind turbine tower collapsing or a rotor blade dropping or being thrown from the nacelle." (Refer to DEIS 3.10.1.2.) On visual and aesthetic, "The greatest impact occurs when the turbines are close to the viewer (i.e., less than 0.5 miles). In such views, the turbines become focal points and begin to alter the perceived land use in the view." (Refer to DEIS, page 110.) On property value, "The handful of premium priced executive or second homes located in the project area or viewshed, which would derive such a premium in part for their views, may be impacted." (Refer to DEIS page 20, Cushman & Wake.) No one will grant a mortgage on a house blighted by noise pollution.

My attitude towards the wind industry has hardened considerably after several visits to the Bear Creek Wind Farm in Pennsylvania. When I first saw this group of 400 ft. turbines I was shocked at how alien and out of place they are with the natural setting. These things absolutely dwarf everything around them and look as if they belong in the movie War of the Worlds. And the noise – nothing in all my research totally prepared me for the unnatural thrashing and whooshing sound of the 300 ft. diameter blades. Nobody should be forced to live within one mile of these things.

To all Cohocton residents who may fear retribution from relatives or loss of business from voicing your opinion on this proposed project, the time has come to stand up and be heard. UPC has accelerated the project timetable for fear of an 18-month statewide moratorium on all wind power development. On April 26 there will be a public hearing on the special use permitting of turbines, even though the state environmental quality review process is incomplete. This utility scale project will have a lasting negative impact on our small community for decades. We, as tax paying Americans have a right to be critical of an industry where survival depends on government tax credits, subsidies and rapid depreciation allowances.

This industry exaggerates the benefits and ignores the disadvantages. GE admits that its turbines' effective full rated capacity factor is only 10% in New York inland sites due to the unpredictability of wind. Wind farms will only be a supplemental source of power and are useless at mitigating climate change. Wind power has almost no relation to oil imports – almost no electricity is produced by burning oil. These machines are enormous, the likes of which most people cannot comprehend unless you have actually stood underneath them. The Statue of Liberty is 305 ft. tall from foundation base to torch. Add another 115 ft. to the top of her torch and we have reached the colossal height of the C96 turbine that will dominate our hilltops like a visual stain. Our Town Board in their infinite wisdom set the maximum allowable turbine height at 500 ft. with no limit set on total number of turbines allowed. The current proposal is for no less than 50 of these leviathans to be erected all over Cohocton.

You have to ask yourself, if the proponents' assertions that this project is in fact unstoppable are true, then what will Cohocton look like years from now? Would anybody willingly move to an industrial wind turbine town? Will the last person to leave the town of UPC please turn off the lights?

Sincerely,  
Hans Daatselaar