

March 19, 2018

Hon. Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker of the Assembly  
New York State Assembly  
LOB 932  
Albany, New York 12248

Hon. Michael Cusick  
Chairman, Energy Committee  
New York State Assembly  
LOB 724  
Albany, New York 12248

Hon. Helen E. Weinstein  
Chairwoman, Ways and Means Committee  
New York State Assembly  
LOB 923  
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie, Chairman Cusick, and Chairwoman Weinstein:

We are writing in opposition to Assembly Bill A.9053A, sponsored by Assemblywoman Addie Jenne, which proposes to restrict state funding for the construction or operation of any wind project in designated areas around Fort Drum.

Both of us served in the Armed Forces and we believe that decisions about how best to protect the mission should be left to our military. DoD has extensive experience working with states and local bases to determine how best to ensure compatibility of wind development and military operations. However, when it comes to designated areas around Fort Drum, A.9053A substitutes a one-size fits all approach for DoD's own judgement. In fact, the bill's establishment of fixed standoff distances for development runs counter to the DoD's position that it is "not possible to apply a 'one-size-fits-all' standoff distance between DoD military readiness activities and development projects" and that "generic standoff distances are not useful..."

In the past five years, DoD's Siting Clearinghouse, whose job is to assess the potential impact of proposed energy developments on training and other military requirements, has reviewed thousands of proposed wind projects. The overwhelming majority of those were found to pose no issue to defense operations. In the small minority of cases where the Clearinghouse concluded that a proposed project could have an impact, DoD has taken steps to protect the military mission, negotiating agreements that have forced significant changes to wind projects. We are not aware of a single wind project that has ever being built over DoD's objection.

Recently, Congress strengthened the law governing DoD's review process. The law now explicitly requires procedures be established to ensure local military installations are consulted on proposed developments. It also expands the Secretary of Defense's authority to issue a determination that a project, in isolation *or cumulatively with other projects*, presents an unacceptable risk to national security—including risks of significantly impairing or degrading DoD's ability to conduct training and maintain readiness.

The wind energy industry is a vital economic engine, employing more than 100,000 Americans, 11.5 percent of which are veterans according to the national, nonpartisan business group Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2). DoD has a track record of successfully balancing wind development, and the jobs it brings, with military requirements. The Department's practice is to base its decisions on extensive site-specific, science-based analyses conducted by the military services and supported by some of the leading civilian experts in the country. We believe that practice should continue and that DoD should be allowed to decide for itself how best to protect the military mission. A.9053A is inconsistent with that approach.

Sincerely,

Dave Belote, Col (ret) USAF  
Managing Partner, DARE Strategies LLC

Jon Powers, Former Special Advisor on Energy,  
US Army