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Costs Outweigh Benefits for Proposed Windmill Project

Pennsylvania State Representative Doyle Heffley

Atlantic Wind, a division of Iberdrola Renewables, is proposing to construct 40 wind turbines on a mountain ridge just above a housing development on the Penn Forest Township and Towamensing Township line.

As a lifelong resident of Carbon County, I am opposed to the possibility of wind turbines tarnishing our beautiful landscape. I understand the need for alternative energy, but building 40 windmills along our horizon, nestled within the tourism-dependent Pocono region, is not the answer. Further, windmills are neither effective nor safe. A report released by the bipartisan Pennsylvania Joint State Government Commission earlier this year found that wind energy projects destroy 42 times as much land resources as natural gas and 22 times that of coal to generate the same amount of power. Windmills also are widely known to cause irreparable harm to birds and other wildlife.

While the American bald eagle is finally returning to Northeastern Pennsylvania, the federal government is considering a policy which would allow wind energy companies to kill or injure up to 4,200 bald eagles a year before they’re required to take action. I’m also troubled by the fact that wind energy companies like Iberdrola Renewables are relying on federal tax credits to finance these projects. Meanwhile, the windmills will most likely be imported from overseas, sending our tax dollars to foreign manufactures. To put it into perspective, the federal government takes our hard-earned cash and gives to for-profit companies under the guise of renewable energy, and then sells the electricity back to you at a higher rate.

The only folks that stand to profit from this project are the Bethlehem Water Authority and a few corporate executives at Oregon-based Iberdrola Renewables.

The installation of windmills in Penn Forest Township, in addition to being an eyesore, will disrupt the rich natural habitat along the ridge. When it comes to this proposed windmill project, the marginal benefits certainly do not outweigh the costs.

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