Industrial Wind Projects Clash with Real Farming

Farmers, the backbone of the American economy, have become a frequent target of

industrial wind energy developers. The wind speculators realize the hardship usually

endured by hard-working farmers, and often try to exploit that by presenting a onesided

case claiming a farmer can earn big bucks, with low effort and little downside.

This insightful farmer says that legislators are being fooled by easy money promises:

“There is not enough critical thinking skills or common sense being used when big

money energy companies enter rural communities”. [Note the wind developer: Apex.]

This is consistent with what other farmers have written. This one says: Four Reasons

We Will Not Sign a Wind Lease. Then there is this: “Farmer Regrets Signing Wind

Turbine Lease”. This Wisconsin farmer came to realize that he had effectively signed

away control of his own property, and now says that it is his biggest regret. This farmer

laments signing a wind lease, saying “What Have I Done?” An Illinois farmer says the

extra income is not worth the problems that have resulted.

Clearly Buyer Beware applies here! Below is a sample of studies and reports that have

concluded that there will likely be a financial loss to farmers who either host industrial

turbines, or (in some cases) when the turbines are even within 15± miles of their farm:

1 - Economic Importance of Bats in Agriculture. [See sample NC data, and NY data.]

(Another sample study about the significant economic value of bats on farming.)

2 - Studies conclude that wind turbines can reduce crop growth (e.g. here and here).

3 - Study: local weather can be adversely impacted by wind projects.

4 - The Incompatibility of Wind Turbines and Crop Farming.

5 - Analysis of Environmental Impacts of Large Wind Projects.

6 - Modern Wind Turbines Generate Dangerous Dirty Electricity.

7 - Many studies about turbines harming livestock and wildlife (also here & here).

8 - Turbines put lives of crop-dusters in peril (e.g. here and here).

9 - How Higher Energy Prices Will Affect U.S. Agricultural Production.

10-Farmer threatened with lawsuit for normal farming operations on wind project.

11-Agriculture and Wind Development are Incompatible.

12-Wind farms and family farms — not the best of neighbors

It’s likely that most farmers are not familiar with these studies and reports, as they are

not only highly technical, but are in a very specialized area.

Wind leases with farmers have been called among the most restrictive contracts in the

country. Since they are written by the wind developer’s attorneys, it’s not surprising

that they are extremely biased against the landowner. Here’s a summary of over forty

legal and financial concerns that should be given a LOT of thought.

Due to the severe complications that can result from these lopsided contracts, there

have been many cautionary advisories (from farm agencies, lawyers, academics, etc.).

One attorney said a wind lease: “was the most one-sided, unconscionable, over

reaching contract I had ever examined in my entire 54 years of law practice!”

Independent observers have concluded that these contracts effectively change the

farmer’s legal position from being a fee simple owner, to that of a caretaker.

If you only have time to read one item, please see “Wind Energy Production: Legal

Issues and Related Liability Concerns for Landowners.” This is written by Dr. Roger

McEowen, a renown scholar at the Iowa Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation...

The fact that there are so many of these reports is a testament to the complexity and

severity of the wind lease contracts — which can be over 35 pages of legalese.

Note also that the wind developer who signs the Lease will likely soon be gone (after

they have skimmed the profits), so the farmer will end up dealing with not only a

stranger, but a LLC with little or no assets. In other words, there will be little recourse

for the farmer if something goes wrong — which in 20± years may well happen.

Yet another consideration is the paltry amount most landowners are paid. This Penn

State College of Agricultural Resources News Release says: “Don’t give it all away for

crumbs from the table.” As a point of reference, each 2.5 MW turbine could make

$500,000± a year in profits to the developer. Why should the farmer — a key ingredient

in the whole process — get the insultingly low amount of $10,000 per year?

Watch these short videos (1, 2, 3, and 4), which are a re-enactment of a farmer being

solicited by a fast-talking wind energy salesman. In these films the farmer isn’t fooled

by the slick salesperson, and asks insightful questions. See: “Mr. Farmer, Please Read.”

Even if a farmer says that they can accept all the liabilities mentioned so far, what

about the health consequences to his own family? Numerous studies from independent

experts have identified a variety of potential health risks for those living within a mile

of industrial wind turbines. This Leaseholder now says they would not do it again.

Consider this: 23 landowners who host wind turbines on their property, have filed suit

against two different wind developers, claiming that the developers “carelessly and

negligently failed to adequately disclose the true nature and effects that the wind

turbines would have on the community, including the plaintiffs’ homes.”

This sums up the situation nicely: wind energy is a completely artificial idea, where there is zero scientific proof that it has any Net Societal Benefit. There is no free lunch, so farmers should be extremely cautious about these solicitations.

John Droz, jr. Physicist email: “aaprjohn@northnet.org” 12/1/17

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