



March 14, 2011

Dear Craftsbury Selectboard,

By unanimous vote of seven attending members on March 14, 2011, Craftsbury Conservation Commission is sending the following statement to the Selectboard regarding the Kingdom Community Wind project.

The Craftsbury Conservation Commission became formally involved after a period of study and reflection on the regional effect of the Kingdom Community Wind (KCW) project proposal. The magnitude of this project is unlike any other land use development in our immediate region and must be carefully considered.

The Public Service Board has completed its technical hearings on the proposed KCW project and will soon have the entire body of evidence it must consider in its deliberations as to whether or not to award a Certificate of Public Good. Green Mountain Power must have this document in hand, meet all PSB ordered conditions and legal challenges, in order to begin construction.

The town of Craftsbury has been a party in the KCW case, presenting evidence regarding the aesthetics criterion, i.e. the effect of the proposed project on the "quality of life" in the town. An attorney and one expert witness hired to represent the town's interest, presented evidence that construction of the project would impact the town's aesthetics.

While the town of Craftsbury is not a party in natural resources criteria such as wildlife habitat, natural communities, wetlands, and water resources, the Conservation Commission has closely followed evidence submitted on all criteria. These natural resources are of concern to the commission as they extend beyond the boundaries of the proposed project.

It is the conclusion of the Craftsbury Conservation Commission that the proposed benefits of the project do not outweigh the adverse impacts to our natural heritage. We come to this conclusion based on testimony of experts, including a contingent of Agency of Natural Resources biologists. We are concerned that the proposed KCW project will:

- Significantly alter a 450 million year-old iconic ridgeline visible throughout Orleans County. As stated in the 2005 Craftsbury Town Plan, our natural features are at the core of our sense of place and our community identity.

- Significantly alter critical wildlife habitat, especially for black bear, moose, whitetail deer, bobcat, other furbearers, as well as a myriad smaller, less obvious species critical to the web of life in the Northeast Kingdom.
- Have potentially disastrous unintended consequences with regard to water flows off the developed site. Summer thunderstorms have become more intense in the region. Violent fluctuations in water flow are common in the area now. Once the natural features are disturbed by construction as proposed, no human intervention can protect the downstream communities from potentially disastrous flooding. Craftsbury has already experienced impacts of disturbed watersheds when the Seaver Branch flooded and subsequently Town Line Road was washed out (flood of summer 1997). After many weeks and much assistance from FEMA, the road was rebuilt and measures were taken along the river with hopes to prevent such flooding in the future. There are no guarantees that these measures will be effective if the upper reaches of the Seaver Branch watershed are disturbed by such large scale development.
- Be unreliable with regard to electrical generation. The production capacity of the proposed project is 63MW (megawatts), the actual electricity flowing off the ridgeline is more accurately estimated to be closer to 20MW.
- Fail to provide Vermont residents with a stable, low cost power electricity source.
- Fail to provide predicted climate change benefits in the form of carbon dioxide displacements. The amount of electricity predicted from the proposed project is negligible. The purported amount of carbon dioxide displaced is even smaller and will make no effective contribution to Vermont's climate change efforts.

For these reasons, and other potential impacts to our natural heritage, the Craftsbury Conservation Commission is opposed to the development of the proposed Kingdom Community Wind project. We encourage our Selectboard to adopt a similar position.

Sincerely,



Farley Brown, Chair

Craftsbury Conservation Commission

Craftsbury Conservation Commission:

Farley Brown, Walt Gutzman, Joe Houston, Diane Morgan, Elinor Osborn, Annie Volmer (not present at the vote), Jay Wright, Steve Wright