

## **Agencies Concerned About Potential Environmental Impacts of Wind Power Project**

COOPERSTOWN – The period for public comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement of the Jordanville Wind Power Project, proposed by Community Energy, Inc., ended on August 4. Having voiced its concerns about the project in the document "Legal, Visual, Cultural Landscape & Noise Reports for Otsego 2000 and Advocates for Stark to the Town of Warren Town Board," Otsego 2000 has been making it a point to find out what other involved and interested agencies thought of the DEIS.

According to the legal notice submitted by Bernard C. Melewski, special counsel to the Town of Warren and Town of Stark, "Potential environmental impacts from the proposed action include but are not limited to visual impacts, impacts on agriculture, roads, wildlife, water resources, soils, communication facilities and the socio-economic impacts of the project on the community."

Local, state and government officials have weighed in on the DEIS, and these possible impacts of the Jordanville Wind Power Project are coming under heavy scrutiny. Among a long list of agencies sharing the concerns of Otsego 2000 and Advocates for Stark are the State of New York Department of Public Service, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Herkimer County Planning Board.

These and other interested and involved agencies have questioned the impact of the proposed project on a number of levels, including but not limited to:

- scenic views and historic places
- parcels protected in the Herkimer County Farmland Protection Program
- Homeland Security Systems and emergency response systems
- health threats
- loss of habitat and native plant communities
- risk to listed and unlisted raptors
- wetlands and/or other natural resources
- instability of the karst (limestone cave) formations under the project area
- cumulative effects of the visibility of this and other wind power projects in the area
- cultural resources
- the New York State Fish Hatchery in Van Hornesville
- contamination and/or disruption of the water supply

In its criticisms of the DEIS, the New York State Department of Public Service says the document "does not address visibility and potential adverse effects on historic resources that may be eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places. Studies must be supplemented and analysis presented to identify eligible structures, document visibility and potential adverse effects on settings and character of Register-eligible locations and structures."

The Visual Impact Assessment of the DEIS "should be revised to include a cumulative assessment of visual impacts of this program and the Top Notch Wind project in the Towns of Fairfield, Norway, and Little Falls ..." urges the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The DEC also recommends that "a comprehensive survey of karst features be conducted in the project development area."

Karst is defined as an irregular limestone region with sinkholes, underground streams, and caverns. "The sur-

vey should identify bedrock fractures and sinkholes and show their location relative to proposed project activities," says the DEC, which is particularly concerned about the effect of the project on the Van Hornesville Fish Hatchery.

Martha H. Frey, executive director of Otsego 2000, feels that these and other comments of public record confirm that the Jordanville Wind Power Project DEIS, as it stands, is very incomplete.

"It is impossible to understand the range of environmental impacts and appropriate mitigation measures until the applicant provides additional information in a revised or supplemental DEIS," says Frey.

It is now up to the Town of Warren Town Board, as lead agency for the project, to review all comments submitted and determine if a supplemental DEIS is necessary.

As noted by Otsego 2000 and Advocates for Stark Attorney Drayton Grant, "It is clear that the document that my clients and the many other groups and agencies reviewed as the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was seriously flawed in many different respects. It is essential that the Town of Warren Town Board, which has the hard job of serving as the lead agency for this project, require that the corrections and further studies be made. In light of the extent of new and revised reports that have been called for, it is only prudent that once those reports have been prepared, the board hold another hearing so that the board has the advantage of public comment on the revisions."