

HOW CLOSE IS TOO CLOSE?

Industrial turbines, local choice, and the future of our southern hills

Submitted by Annie Barbedo, on behalf of Southern Hills Wind Watch

This is not empty land. This is home.

More than 1,000 homes are within one mile of proposed industrial turbine locations.

THE QUESTION BEFORE US

Governor Kathy Hochul recently noted that New York is not Texas because “we have population density.” She also spoke about local choice and strong home rule.

That raises a direct question for our town: if communities truly have a choice, why did New York create the RAPID Act and ORES process, which can override local laws and local voices?

This matters here because these projects are not being proposed for empty desert or remote open space. They are being discussed near homes, farms, roads, schools, wildlife habitat, waterways, and entire neighborhoods.

In our community alone, more than 1,000 homes are within just one mile of proposed industrial turbines.

That is not one or two houses on a map. It is families, children, seniors, farmers, property owners, and neighbors.

OUR TERRAIN CHANGES EVERYTHING

The southern hills are not flat. Elevation changes are dramatic. Curtain Road in Tully sits roughly 800 feet higher than Long Road.

Now place turbines nearly 680 feet tall on those ridgelines. Depending on the site, the tip of a turbine blade could tower roughly 1,400 to 1,500 feet above homes below.

INDUSTRIAL SCALE, VALLEY IMPACT

That is not a modest change to the view. It is industrial infrastructure dominating entire valleys.

Terrain matters. Sound travels differently across hills and valleys. Wind moves differently. Shadow flicker can reach farther. Ice can fall or be thrown from greater heights. These real-world conditions are why many residents question whether generic computer modeling can accurately predict impacts in a place like ours.

SETBACKS PROTECT PEOPLE

A setback is the distance a turbine must be kept from homes and community spaces. Many residents believe New York’s setbacks are far too small for turbines of this size.

Other places have recognized the need for stronger protections. Bavaria, Germany has used a standard requiring turbines to be set back 10 times the turbine height from homes. For a 680-foot turbine, that can mean more than 1.2 miles.

Some Australian guidelines have recommended about 2 kilometers, or 1.24 miles. Communities in France, Canada, and parts of the United States have also pushed for setbacks greater than one mile because of noise, safety, health, and quality-of-life concerns.

Here, projects are being discussed frighteningly close to where people live.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND PEACE AT HOME

Residents near industrial turbines in other communities have reported sleep disruption, headaches, dizziness, anxiety, ear pressure, heart palpitations, stress, and trouble concentrating.

Studies do not all agree on the extent or cause of these impacts. But one thing should not be controversial: people should be able to sleep, feel safe, and enjoy peace in their own homes. Communities should not be treated as experiments.

ICE THROW IS PHYSICS

Industrial turbine blades can accumulate ice. When blades rotate, ice can break free and travel outward. In our hills, the concern is not only turbine height. It is turbine height plus ridgeline elevation, winter weather, strong valley winds, and homes located below proposed sites.

MORE THAN VIEWS

This issue is about safety, health, water, wildlife, property rights, peace, and the future of our valleys.

The southern hills are living communities, not empty space waiting to be industrialized. Once industrial-scale turbines are placed on these ridges, the change will not be temporary. It will reshape the community for generations.

ASK FOR REAL SETBACKS

Distance should reflect turbine height, terrain, and homes below.

DEMAND LOCAL VOICES

State review should not erase town laws or resident concerns.

PROTECT THE HILLS

Water, wildlife, farms, families, and valley life deserve protection.

Keep the conversation visible. Put out your NO TURBINE lawn sign. Need one?

Contact Bettermae at bettemaerussell11@gmail.com.