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This communication is to notify you that I am opposed to the passage of Local Law No. 2 of the Year 2020, which proposes to amend, repeal and supplement the Town of Barre Zoning Ordinance Chapter 350 referencing Zoning and Wind Energy Conversion Systems. The existing law has flaws that need to be addressed, but the proposed changes to this law not only fail to address those, they appear to have been created to tailor the law to the specific project proposed by Apex/Heritage Wind of Charlottesville, VA. They completely fail to provide protections for the health and welfare, both physical and financial, of the people living and/or owning property in the Town of Barre.

Among the shortcomings of the proposed law, the most egregious are the following:

1. This is a critical omission: "Tip Height" is referenced many times (350-101.6; 350-103.1(h)(1),(2),and (3); 350-103.6) but is not defined. Section 350-98: Definitions contains only this reference to turbine height: "Tower Height *and/or Total Height*: Tower height is equal to the distance from the ground to the top of the tower not including the nacelle or rotor blades." The italics are in the original document. This definition gives the impression that tower height and total height are synonymous. They are not. All parties who deal with WECS recognize that the total height of a turbine is measured "from the ground elevation to the top of the tip of the blade at the apex of rotation." The size of a turbine is a major factor in determining its detrimental effects on those living within several miles of its location. There is also an odd typographical error in 350-103.6: this paragraph is indented farther than #5 or #7 above and below it, respectively, with the result that one might miss this vital requirement if one were not careful. The paragraph gives an imprecise definition of how to measure tip height. Such vagueness must be eliminated, and the proper definition of total height be given in the Definitions section.
2. The increase in total height from 500 ft. to 700 ft. is obviously a concession to Apex/Heritage Wind, which wishes to use a turbine that will be approximately 680 ft. in height. Such a drastic increase in height provides no benefit for those who must live and work among these machines. Apex/Heritage Wind has indicated that it needs to use such tall turbines intended for areas with "light air" in order to maximize energy production. This is an acknowledgement that the wind resource in Barre is inadequate for an efficient WECS. The Town of Barre should not have been selected for a WECS in the first place. Its choice, apparently, was based more on a pliant population with cooperative town officials than it was on technical issues.
3. Inadequate setbacks put residents in greater danger of harm from noise, infrasound effects, shadow flicker, fires, ice throw, and the visual disturbance of having to view giant twirling machines from their homes and as they move about town. Larger setbacks are needed if Barre is to avoid the problems now plaguing other New York communities with operating WECS.
4. Failure to correct measuring setbacks from a building to property line, restricts residents' ability to enjoy all parts of their property. This may even be seen to be a taking.
5. Reduction of property value for those not hosting a turbine on their property: This is a complex issue which will ultimately affect every property owner in the town, but the immediate brunt of value loss caused by the construction and operation of the wind development will be felt by the non-participating properties. A fair law would provide protections for such property owners.

6. The noise limits proposed in this law are woefully out of date. They are those favored by the wind industry but not by the New York State Department of Health, Western New York Public Health Alliance, and the Boards of Health for Orleans and Niagara Counties, who consider such high limits to be detrimental to public health. The Town's ordinance must be updated to conform to the latest research and requirements in this area.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that the proposed revisions to this law follow the desires of the applicant wind developer rather than the concerns and wishes of the people of Barre, a clear majority of whom are not in favor of this project. Several Town officials have refused to recuse themselves and have participated in discussion and votes when they had a documented conflict of interest. They went into executive session with employees of Apex to discuss aspects of the project, thus denying the public the right to see their elected representatives taking actions to protect the rights and needs of Barre citizens.

It appears that most of the individuals who are speaking in favor of changes to the ordinance which would allow approval of the project are those who stand to profit from it in some way. If the project affected them only, it would not be of such great concern. However, 33 mammoth turbines nearly 700 feet tall, whooshing away day and night, topped with flashing red lights, will affect nearly everyone in the town. 55% of the proposed turbines are located on land owned by individuals or entities that are not Barre residents. This alone should be a signal to the town fathers that we are being exploited by outside interests, and they should take steps to protect us. Instead, they seem to feel it is their prerogative to use their position to enrich themselves and their friends and family members. Allowing the applicant wind developer to change our wind law so they can build taller turbines closer to our homes should be the last thing our Town Board should consider.

By now, the experiences of other communities in New York State, not to mention other states and countries abroad, have shown that massive industrial machines like the ones proposed by Apex/Heritage Wind have been disastrous for the humans, animals, and the environment where these machines have been installed. The manufacture, delivery, erection and operation of such wind turbines is in no way environmentally friendly. The electricity produced by such WECS's is unreliable and very expensive for rate payers. The machines have a relatively short lifespan and disposing of their components is becoming a major dumpsite nightmare.

Despite all this, it appears that most Town Board members are prepared to ignore the valid concerns of those opposed to this project, and to embrace the changes to town law that would allow it to be approved. To me, this signals a degree of corruption that I am astounded and saddened to find in our community. I can only assume these same town officials feel shielded from any liability for the damage they may cause by such actions. That may or may not be true. Time will tell. They would do themselves a favor, though, to reject the proposed revisions and undertake an objective and fair revision process for this law.