

Resolution No. 078

EE

May 10, 2012

RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN NEW YORK STATE AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SPEED DEVELOPMENT OF WIND TOWERS IN LAKE ONTARIO'S EASTERN BASIN

By Legislator Louella LeClair:

WHEREAS, New York State is one of five states of the nine Great Lakes States to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the federal government that would expedite regulatory reviews and approvals of proposals to develop industrial offshore wind turbine complexes in the Great Lakes, including the offshore waters of Oswego County in Lake Ontario's eastern basin; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 48 of 2010 the Oswego County Legislature opposed the New York Power Authority (NYPA) plans to site, construct and operate similar offshore wind turbine complexes; and

WHEREAS, prior models indicate that, due to water depths and prevailing wind flow, significant portions of Lake Ontario's eastern basin, including Oswego County's shoreline, would be prime locations for offshore industrial wind turbine complexes; and

WHEREAS, such industrial development would have severe negative impacts on Oswego County's scenic and economically and environmentally sensitive Lake Ontario shoreline; and

WHEREAS, offshore industrial wind turbine complexes will have a negative impact on many Oswego County landowners, homeowners, and businesses, including potential effects on real estate values, scenic vistas, quality of life, and the tourism, hospitality and recreation industry; and

WHEREAS, the economies of New York State and Oswego County are heavily reliant upon the Lake Ontario sport fishery, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation estimates the total economic impact from angler activities in Oswego County at \$43 million; and

WHEREAS, the eastern basin of Lake Ontario has some of the best sport fishing grounds in the lake (and in the world) and it is highly likely that there will be vast restrictions on the use of the waters surrounding wind turbine complexes, and

OSWEGO COUNTY LEGISLATURE

10M-7

WHEREAS, no lasting financial benefit will accrue to any municipality within Oswego County, because industrial offshore wind complexes will be exempt from local real property taxes; and

WHEREAS, the project will require the construction of transmission facilities which would result in a negative economic impact on tourism destinations due to the effect on scenic vistas, and depending on their locations, could also negatively affect the farming community; and

WHEREAS, in areas of the world where offshore wind turbine complexes were developed, the magnitude of green jobs and economic activity promised by developers and politicians seldom came to fruition, and in Oswego County's case, may further be offset by job losses due to negative impacts on existing generating facilities and on the tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, local, state and federal taxpayers would be harmed three times over if industrial wind complexes are built off Oswego County's shores:

1. Wind complexes are not financially viable unless heavily subsidized by taxpayer money; and,
2. The subsidized new generation facilities will compete with and de-value existing tax-paying generating facilities in the County, resulting in higher property tax rates for residents and businesses, and
3. Taxpayers would be charged as ratepayers to pay for new underwater and overland transmission lines; and .

WHEREAS, the likely wind tower construction areas directly abut the Eastern Lake Ontario dune, barrier beach and wetland system, which has been identified as a "unique and irreplaceable" natural coastal area by the New York State Department of State, and designated a "Natural Heritage Area" by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and any such construction could have unknown significant negative impacts on the natural process that maintain this rare natural coastal resource; and

WHEREAS, despite these many significant negative direct impacts that offshore industrial complexes would have on shoreline counties and communities along Lakes Erie and Ontario, the MOU was developed and signed by the Cuomo and Obama administrations without actively seeking any input or participation from such counties and communities; and

WHEREAS, this MOU, in combination with New York State's recent changes to Article 10 of the Public Service Law that unfairly removed local communities from having any say in the siting of potentially harmful generating facilities, portend future site approval processes that are counter to the principles of representative democracy, governed and guided by government officials who do not live within impacted areas, and which callously disregard the wishes and best interests of local citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Oswego County Legislature encourages and welcomes job-creating economic development projects, business expansions, and new businesses in the County that are consistent with our communities' values, enhance quality of life, and present no harm to the unique characteristics of this County that we all cherish; and be it further

RESOLVED, we know that industrial offshore wind turbine complexes are inconsistent with our community goals and best interests for the reasons heretofore stated; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Oswego County Legislature strongly opposes the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding between the federal government and New York State; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Legislature shall forward copies of this Resolution to President Barack Obama, Governor Andrew Cuomo, Senator Charles Schumer, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, Congressman William Owens, Congressman Richard Hanna, Congresswoman Ann Marie Buerkle, State Senator Patty Ritchie, Assemblyman Will Barclay, Assemblyman Ken Blankenbush, Assemblyman Bob Oaks, Assemblywoman Claudia Tenney, the New York State Association of Counties, all New York counties along Lakes Erie and Ontario, and the administrative heads of all state and federal agencies that are signatories to the MOU.

ROLL CALL

YES: 18 NO: 6 ABSENT: 1

I hereby certify that this copy of Resolution #78 of 2012 is true and accurate.

Dated: May 15, 2012 Wendy M. Falls
Wendy M. Falls, Deputy Clerk
Oswego County Legislature

