EC LEG JUL 14 '22 PM1:13

ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. JOHN J. MILLS
LEGISLATOR

July 14th, 2022

April N.M. Baskin
Chairwoman, Erie County Legislature

Timothy J. Meyers
Chairman, Energy and Environment Committee

HAND DELIVERED

Re: Request for conversation regarding wind turbines in Lake Erie and their impact on our water supply

Legislators,

On Tuesday, July 12th I attended a public meeting hosted by the Citizens Against Wind Turbines in Lake Erie organization at the Southtowns Walleye Association in Hamburg. Nearly 100 people from across Erie County attended the meeting in opposition to the current proposal on the table.

The current proposal from the manufacturer Diamond Wind, a company based in Boston, would place up to 50 wind turbines in the lake from Buffalo to Dunkirk. These turbines would be placed in the water supply for 11 million people.

While Diamond Wind has not provided an environmental impact statement, we already know their impact as it is well documented. First, they will immediately disrupt the migratory patterns of birds, bats, and fish, some of which span the entire continent. Second, the plastic blades will erode with use and time and, as noted by the Chair of Erie County's Fisheries Advisory Board Richard Davenport, will deposit microplastics into the local ecosystem to be ingested by wildlife and humans alike. It was further stated up to 2-3 tons of microplastic waste could be shed into Lake Erie per turbine or for the entire project. I would like to remind everyone in 2015 this body passed Local Law 8-2, a law prohibiting the sale of personal cosmetic products containing microbeads in Erie County. We did this because we understood the harm microbeads can cause our environment. I was happy to help lead that legislation through the Legislature during my time as Chairman and support it. We've already acknowledged these beads pose a serious threat to Erie County's environment as they pass through the wastewater treatment facilities in local waterways, like Lake Erie, and I believe we must continue to work to protect our local waterways and environment.

We have discussed wind turbines in this body for years because the issue is ongoing. As we speak, developers are trying to put these massive structures in our waterways to make a quick buck while our community deals with and suffers from the environmental fallout they will create.

I respectfully request the Energy and Environment committee host another discussion as soon as possible on this issue. We must continue to keep the conversation at the forefront and continue to state the negative impact this would have in our community. We should not be willing to risk our environmental health so that some out-of-town corporation can profit off our community.

Thank you very much for consideration of my request, I am available for any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

John Mills,
Erie County Legislator