

Closing Statement given by Sean Mahoney at Maine Land Use Regulation Commission

Meeting - October 5, 2011

The Bowers Wind Project should be approved by LURC. The evidence presented establishes that the natural resource impacts of the project are minimal, that the public's health, safety and general welfare are adequately protected and that technical and financial criteria are met. The only contested issue concerns the project's effect on scenic character and existing uses tied to scenic character. In that regard, the Commission is directed by statute, ([35-A M.R.S.A § 3452 (3)) to consider six criteria, including the project's "purpose and the context of the proposed activity." CLF submitted testimony of Dr. Cameron Wake and Abigail Krich that spoke directly to that factor.

Dr. Wake's testimony focused on the adverse impacts to Maine's agriculture, forestry, winter recreation, and marine resources that have occurred and will continue to occur with greater frequency as our climate continues to warm and particularly as our winter seasons shorten. These impacts – from increased risks to Maine's blueberry industry from frost damage due to lack of snow cover to northward expansion of invasive pests like the woolly adelgid – are real and not just a theoretical parade of horrors. As noted by Dr. Wake, the emission choices we make today – in Maine, the Northeast US and world wide – will impact the future health of our natural resources and the communities and businesses that depend on them.

Ms. Krich's testimony focused on the role wind power plays in the regional energy infrastructure and here in Maine. As you will recall, Ms. Krich laid out the facts about wind power – that it is a "price taker" and will always displace more expensive sources of power such as natural gas, oil, or coal; that wind power provides a stable source of power compared to the price instability of fossil fuels; that the existing transmission system in Maine and New England can accommodate significant increases in wind power; and that such increases will not require the construction of new fossil fuel power plants to

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balance that growth and will result in the significant reduction of air pollution, including Nitrogen Oxide, Sulfur Dioxide and Carbon Dioxide.

We recognize that the changes to the landscape associated with this project are not inconsequential. I personally found the testimony of Roger Milliken to be the most eloquent balancing of the competing issues. We support the Commission's focus on mitigating those impacts and in particular a focus on using the best available technology for lighting mitigation. We do not believe, however, that the project significantly compromises views from a scenic resource of state significance such that it has an unreasonable adverse effect on scenic character or associated existing uses.

Yesterday, a panel of scientists, former government officials and national security experts issued a report recommending that we begin researching a radical fix to climate change - - directly manipulating the Earth's climate to lower the temperature by increasing the amount of solar energy that bounces back into space before it gets to earth through such means as seeding the atmosphere w/reflective particles, launching giant mirrors above the earth or spewing ocean water into the air to form clouds. The idea of geoengineering the planet is a radical response to the political failure to take meaningful steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is akin to undergoing chemotherapy and radiation to treat a condition curable through diet and exercise. The Commission can do its part to avoid such radical treatment by approving a project that meets the applicable development criteria and will harness Maine's natural, clean energy resources to replace energy sources that create greenhouse gas emissions and that are inherently economically unstable.