

## Invenergy Not Revealing Important Information

Dear Editor:

As both an electrical engineer and longtime resident of Greenbrier County, I attended the recent meeting regarding Invenergy's planned wind turbine project for our county with great interest.

On the surface, wind energy seems like a wonderful idea - an inexpensive and pollution-free way of meeting our needs while still protecting our environment. In fact, our national legislators thought it such a good idea that they enacted huge tax incentives for companies to develop such projects.

However, with much research, and after hearing from people who live where such projects have already been completed, I have come to realize that my initial impression was exactly the opposite of reality. To allow Invenergy to proceed with this planned project would be a disaster for Greenbrier County.

One point of concern is the so-called "green credits" that Invenergy will receive and be able to sell. In the twisted logic of today's regulations, since Invenergy is generating "clean power," it can get a "pollution credit" which it can then sell to another company, and which then allows that other company to legally generate more pollution.

In a way, that means these "wind factories" will essentially increase pollution, and no matter what Invenergy tells us, there is nothing stopping the company from selling these pollution credits to its lessee, Westvaco, so the added pollution is right in our backyard. In other words, there's the very real possibility that this project could mean a net gain of pollution in Greenbrier County.

Previous projects have been associated with huge numbers of bat kills, so these turbines actually threaten to alter the ecosystem all on their own. Each turbine contains hundreds of gallons of flammable hydraulic fluid, and one lightning strike could cause a terrible forest fire that would be an incredible burden to our dedicated and courageous local volunteer firefighters.

These so-called "green credits" and other ecological threats are really just the proverbial "tip of the iceberg," an iceberg that Invenergy is doing its best to keep submerged. Invenergy is not even claiming that the power it generates will lower our local electric bills. It's all headed for the power-hungry urban areas in the north-east U.S. There's nothing inexpensive about this power, either.

To start, it's you and me and every other taxpayer who's paying for this project. From what I learned listening to the company spokesman, the company will get back two-thirds of what it invests in tax subsidies alone.

In places in Europe where they are decades ahead of the U.S. in wind power, the installation of wind turbines has increased the overall cost of power. I've read that Denmark, which generates more power from wind than any other country in Europe, also has the highest electric rates.

The power produced by these "wind factories" is extremely undependable, so their installation does not save the need to have traditional power plants, and the irregular nature of the power produced can cause problems on the power grid. Numerous projects both here and abroad have

already been abandoned.

I felt a bit like I was getting "hustled" when I attended Invenergy's presentation in Williamsburg last week. The company claims its goal is to have these turbines "at least one mile" from any dwelling, but all you need to do is look at the maps to see it's a goal the company has no chance of even coming close to achieving. I've read that people living within a mile of these behemoths will be subjected to a constant whooshing sound, which sounds to me like some form of mental torture. The wind towers are so huge that you can actually feel them vibrating the ground from almost the same distance.

Even if you're lucky enough to live a safe distance from one, it's going to spoil the backcountry you love to visit. Large tracts of land will be cut off from hunters and hikers - some of the best wild country remaining in the U.S.

One of our main industries in West Virginia is tourism. Brochures, TV ads and web sites that promote our great state are filled with views of ridge tops. How will they look with huge wind turbines strung along the view?

Invenergy thinks it can pull a fast one on some unsuspecting West Virginians. There are places out in the Midwest with a much more dependable supply of wind where the company could plant its turbines. The company is hoping it can get this project through before anyone realizes what a disaster it is for local residents.

This isn't being done out of a desire to generate "clean power." Invenergy is doing it for the money - for the huge tax subsidy that we'll all have to pay.

Greenbrier County residents have so much to lose and absolutely nothing to gain if this project goes through, and anyone who considers the facts will clearly come to the same conclusion.

I urge our national senators and congressional representatives to look closely at the federal tax incentives for wind power projects. Take a lead from our European neighbors who have been there and done that. The environment and West Virginia would both fare better if those incentives were shifted to clean coal technologies.

I urge our governor and our local legislators to listen carefully to their constituents. From what I saw at the meeting in Williamsburg, they will find no local support for this project, and in fact, they will discover extreme opposition. We all know that the one thing that speaks louder than big corporate donations is a massive grass roots effort.

This is the "hottest button" issue. Our representatives need to climb on board quickly or get left behind come election day.

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