

**STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD**

Docket No. 7156

Petition of UPC Vermont Wind, LLC for a Certificate of)
Public Good pursuant to 30 V.S.A. section 248,)
authorizing it to construct up to a 52 MW wind electric)
generation facility, and associated transmission and)
interconnection facilities, in Sheffield and Sutton, Vermont,)
and operate the same.)

**PREFILED REBUTTAL TESTIMONY OF
ALAN M. ROBERTSON**

ON BEHALF OF UPC VERMONT WIND, LLC

September 25, 2006

Summary:

Mr. Robertson offers his opinion as a local resident on UPC Vermont Wind, LLC's proposed project. He is in support of the wind project.

1 **Q. What is your name and address?**

2 Response: My name is Alan M. Robertson. I live at 1619 Berry Hill Road in
3 Sheffield.

4
5 **Q. Are you or any member of your immediate family employed by UPC?**

6 Response: No.

7
8 **Q. Do you or any member of your immediate family have a financial interest in
9 UPC?**

10 Response: No.

11

12 **Q. How long have you lived in Sheffield?**

13 Response: I purchased my land in 1979, and commuted from Portsmouth, NH
14 about twice a month to work on it until 2001, when I retired to the property.

15

16 **Q. Where is your property in relation to the proposed wind project?**

17 Response: My home is about ½ mile from the closest wind turbine of the southern
18 array.

19

20 **Q. Will you be able to see the project from your home?**

21 Response: My home probably had the best view of the southern array in Sheffield,
22 although the forest on the property screens most other views of the turbines.

1 **Q. What outdoor activities do you enjoy on your property?**

2 Response: My 65-acre property is a registered Tree Farm- I'm the Vice Chair of
3 the Tree Farm Program in Vermont- and the property has an extensive trail system,
4 ponds, and small clearings and meadows. I spend about half my time working in the
5 woods improving the forest and trails, and performing harvest activities. I love
6 working in the woods, and take pleasure in walking, snowshoeing, and cross-
7 country skiing the trails. I encourage my neighbors to take advantage of my trails
8 and all of them do, either in walking, horseback riding, using ATV's, or skiing.
9 I'm an avid hiker and have hiked extensively over the southern reaches of the
10 Hardscrabble Range.

11

12 **Q. Will you be able to see the turbines from roads that you routinely travel on or**
13 **from other public places in the area that you frequent?**

14 Response. The location of the southern array of the windfarm is such that it isn't
15 easily visible to those who live on the southern slopes of Hardscrabble. The
16 northern side of the Miller's Run valley has a better view, but at very significant
17 distance. Since most residents live in the deepest parts of the valley, the southern
18 side, or the western regions, few in Sheffield will have easy views of the southern
19 array from their homes. Most residents of Sheffield will have virtually no view of
20 the northern array from their homes. I can see the southern array because of the
21 unique nature of my home. I'll be able to see the turbines easily from some of the
22 roads I frequently use in Sheffield.

1 **Q. Expert witnesses for the Town of Sutton, and Universal Health Services, Inc.,**
2 **UHS of Sutton, Inc., and Ridge Protectors, Inc. variously testified that the turbines**
3 **will be “freakish giants in the landscape” (Brown PFT, p. 10, line 11), and will shock**
4 **and offend the average person, because they will be out of character with their**
5 **surroundings, and significantly diminish the scenic qualities of the area. (Brown PFT,**
6 **p. 8, lines 16-18; Dodson PFT, p. 15, lines 16-22; Jewell PFT, p. 26, lines 4-8). Do you**
7 **agree?**

8 Response: As a military retiree, I have had the good fortune to travel extensively
9 both in the United States and overseas. Those travels have allowed me to gain an
10 appreciation for what we have in our country, and what others have an appreciation
11 for in their countries. Almost all countries I have visited or lived in have protected
12 their most significant peaks, views and vistas, but have allowed communications
13 towers or outlook structures- some truly ugly- on many of their lesser peaks with
14 restrictions on any commercial development. In the case of wind turbines, few have
15 questioned their appearance and many have approved of their construction,
16 realizing that they are a much better alternative to other forms of power generation.

17 Knowing little about the technology, I was worried about the visual impact
18 as well as some other impacts of the turbines when UPC first contacted some of
19 their potential neighbors in Sheffield. I took it upon myself to visit a windfarm
20 similar to what UPC proposed to build in our town. I spent almost two days in
21 Fenner, NY observing the windfarm there and talking with many of the local

1 residents and officials who went through the same learning curves we are going
2 through here in Vermont.

3 My feelings concerning the visuals of the windfarm changed dramatically as
4 a result of this visit. I am completely at ease with the presence of the turbines. They
5 obviously take a little time to get used to, but I believe that over a short period of
6 time, they will actually become a valuable and historic part of the landscape of
7 Sheffield.

8 I should note that one must put the quality of the ridgelines in Sheffield and
9 Sutton in perspective. There are hundreds of ridgelines in Vermont. The most
10 significant – and many that aren't – are already protected through public ownership
11 or due to their environmental significance. Many more ridgelines that aren't
12 visually significant haven't the wind resource, or the location that would make them
13 economically feasible for wind development. Only a few ridgelines have the
14 combination of wind, location, and relative insignificance to be considered.
15 Sheffield has those characteristics, with the added bonus of few people living
16 anywhere near the project site. I am actually looking forward to the presence of the
17 turbines. It would be but one more chapter in the environmentally progressive
18 history of our state.

19

20 **Q. Do you have any additional thoughts about the proposed project?**

21 Response: My visit to the Fenner windfarm also put to rest my fears concerning
22 virtually all of the “problems” of windfarms being raised by those against the

1 development. In fact, the biggest surprise for me in this whole debate is the level of
2 disinformation those against the windfarm have been successful in disseminating to
3 the general public over the past year. Few seem to question their information,
4 including the press, and their continued repetition of falsehoods, rumors, and
5 exaggerations have poisoned many against the concept of wind power at a time
6 when an open mind and some innovation are going to be required if we are to
7 overcome our dependence on fossil fuels.

8 While I appreciate this opportunity to speak out as a local resident on the
9 legitimacy and virtues of this project, it is not appropriate for the PSB to simply
10 listen to locals that may have selfish or misinformed opinions about the project. It is
11 imperative that they see for themselves “up close and personal” what a good wind
12 project looks like, and talk to those who actually live around such a project. Our
13 governor traveled a thousand miles to an ugly, massive windfarm outside of the
14 United States that is totally unrepresentative of the proposed project in Sheffield,
15 and deemed wind “not worth it”, citing the “roads and power lines” as “quite an
16 imposition” on the landscape. A visit to Fenner would put to rest the inaccuracy of
17 his statements, and give the PSB some honest references in this process. I would
18 ask the PSB: go to the Fenner Windfarm and see for yourself, don’t just listen to us!

19

20 **Q. Does this conclude your testimony at this time?**

21 Response: Yes.