

**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
JACK SIMONS**

ON BEHALF OF UPC VERMONT WIND, LLC

September 25, 2006

Summary:

Mr. Simons 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 John M. Simons, and my address is Mosher Rd., Sheffield,
3 VT.

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 been living in Sheffield?**

13 Response. I have owned real estate in this part of Sheffield for 42 years and have
14 had my residence on this site for 18 years. I should add, I have no ownership
15 interest in the land in question for the turbines, nor am I well-acquainted with any of
16 the lot owners involved.

17

18 **Q. Where is your property in relation to the wind project, and will you be able to**
19 **see the project from your home?**

20 Response. My home is located about 2 ½ miles south of the site for the proposed
21 wind farm. It sits at the corners of Mosher Rd. and Town Farm Road. The turbines
22 will be in view from many positions on this parcel of land, and additionally, from
23 other land my wife and I own that is located even closer to the turbine site.

1

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

3 Response. We use our property for all sorts of recreational activities, including
4 gardening, exercising our two dogs, horseback riding as well as raising horses, and
5 nature walks.

6

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

9 Response. We will be able to see the turbines every time we leave the house in an
10 automobile or on foot. Traveling to places such as Lyndonville, where we do the
11 bulk of our shopping and also eat lunch every day, we will be able to see them from
12 every road: Mosher Rd.; Nelson Hill Rd.; Berry Hill Rd.; and VT Rte. 122.

13

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

20 **Do you agree?**

21 Response. Neither my wife nor I consider the visual impacts of the project to be a
22 problem. Indeed, both of us look forward to the turbines being in place because of
23 what we feel will be their majestic presence and their grace. And of course in the

1 comparative sense, the turbines will be no more of an intrusion than, as one super
2 example, the coming of Rte 191 back in the 1970s. That's the super highway that
3 virtually cut the town of Sheffield in half and, along with being visually unattractive,
4 generates automotive noises 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

5

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

7 Response. We consider most of the purported problems cited by alarmists to be
8 largely the products of overheated – and decidedly negative – imaginations.

9 Regarding noise, for example, I took a trip to Searsburg to see the turbines there, and
10 I was astonished about how quiet the turbines actually are.

11 A second issue here is over exaggeration in regards to clear-cutting. The sum
12 total of permanent clearing seems to add up to no more than a good-sized hayfield.
13 And a third issue is downright laughable: we are warned that the wind project will
14 “destroy the town’s tourist business.” The truth of the matter is that there is no such
15 thing as matters now stand! That is, Sheffield does not contain a single store or gas
16 station or restaurant or inn or bed & breakfast. As the last person to operate the
17 general store here – one that I closed in 1982 for lack of business – I can attest there
18 has been absolutely no movement here to invest time and/or money in any such
19 tourist enterprises.

20 I also would like to comment regarding “over population” as a potential
21 problem. Strange as it may seem, the town’s population still is smaller than it was
22 before the Civil War! That is, the 2000 census shows a figure of 726 residents while
23 for example, the comparable 1840 figure is 821. Moreover, the highest population in

1 town history occurred way back in 1880 at 882 persons. Meaning, in summary, the
2 notion of overpopulation is nothing more than an instance of anti-logical hysteria.

3 I am convinced that the wind project represents all sorts of opportunities for
4 several different kinds of profit – both financial and ethical – to both individual
5 residents and the town. For just one example, the money stemming from the
6 contract will allow Sheffield – which is one of the NEK’s poorer towns – to
7 recompense members of the local volunteer fire department in some manner plus
8 buy (for the very first time) a brand new fire truck. And of course there is the matter
9 of lowering real estate taxes for every town landowner, resident and otherwise.

10 Regarding the matter of ethics here (and this is the part that concerns me the
11 most), it seems obvious that the time has come for us Vermonters to quit being
12 nothing but energy consumers and embark upon a role as contributors of a kind of
13 energy that’s clean, quiet, and ever-renewable.

14 All of the above brings me to a final comment. Totally lost in all the combat
15 over this project is the indisputable fact that the property lots in question are
16 privately owned. That is to say, in the context of an economic system supposedly
17 based upon free enterprise transactions, it seems totally out of line to empower butt-
18 in-sky non-owners to veto the peaceable deals made between a legitimate company
19 and legitimate landowners merely on the basis of an opinion about purported
20 aesthetic superiority.

21

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

23 Response. Yes it does.