

Why Aren't We Serious About Saving Fort Drum?

As the saying goes: “talk is cheap.” As a Northern NY (NNY) native, I know hundreds of North Country citizens. Although these good people have differing views on other matters, there appears to be universal agreement that Fort Drum is of critical importance. An obvious benefit is that it's the region's largest employer. Even more significantly, it plays a key role in defending our national security.

Unfortunately we now have a situation where our NNY leaders *talk the talk*, but very few are actually *walking the walk*. The industrial wind energy matter has exposed the embarrassing reality that when financial enticements and political agendas are introduced into the equation, common sense often gets blown out the window.

Let's be clear about one thing: when the next [BRAC](#) (Base Realignment & Closure) review comes along (and it likely will), if Fort Drum's mission or operational readiness has been compromised for ANY reason (e.g. industrial wind energy interference), then it is **much** more likely that the base will be either reduced or moved.

The hard-working people in nearby Rome thought that this would never happen to an important, major SAC facility like [Griffiss Air Base](#) (which was Oneida County's largest employer) – but now it's gone! Same thing for the [base](#) at Plattsburgh...

As a physicist and energy expert, I want to see our state and national energy policies based on real Science. As of now, they are **not**. Instead our energy policies are written by special-interest lobbyists, who could care less about Science, citizens or Fort Drum.

Consider the fact that there has never been a genuine Scientific assessment that has concluded that industrial wind energy is a **Net Societal Benefit**. Anywhere. *Ever*. Now consider the fact that there is significant evidence from independent experts that wind energy is a **net technical, economic, and environmental liability**...

Knowing that, what sense does it make to negatively impact any military facility anywhere, for the benefit of such an unscientific lobbyist-driven energy option?

The good news is that there are reasonable things we can do to fix this. Our basic choice here is: we can *talk* about how important Fort Drum is – or we can actually *take meaningful measures* to protect it.

Below are specific suggestions for protecting Fort Drum. Surprisingly, so far, **none** of them has been fully and properly implemented. (BTW, I've passed this list by several knowledgeable people [civic leaders, legislators, lawyer, military, etc.] and they agreed with it)...

1) Fort Drum personnel must speak more candidly to legislators and local leaders about problems caused by wind energy. Traditionally active military personnel carefully avoid matters that are considered political. Recently this has gotten better (e.g. the [meeting](#) with Lewis County legislators, and the [position](#) the Fort Drum representative took about a proposed nearby wind project). More straight talk needs to come from Fort Drum personnel, directed to our representatives – as those legislators are the enablers of the wind energy that is interfering with Fort Drum’s operation.

What we should all be very clear about is that (due to national security concerns), Fort Drum personnel will NEVER reveal the full extent of the problems that wind energy is actually causing them.

2) High-level retired military people should step up to defend Fort Drum. Since they no longer must be politically correct, they can be much more blunt than active military personnel. In some other states, there is a formal group of retired generals who regularly meet to discuss and take a stand on military issues in their state. In North Carolina the [Military Affairs Commission](#) is an excellent example. Such a group should be formally set up in NY to help defend all NY military facilities.

3) See that the [DANC Joint Land Use Study \(JLUS\)](#) is unequivocal regarding the wind turbine - Fort Drum interference issue. There were high hopes for this project when it was announced last year. However, based on a variety of developments since then, it is now questionable as to how accurate or helpful this report will be in protecting Fort Drum. For example, the process is being allowed to compromise the results. We need to leave no stone unturned to get this important study right.

4) All nearby counties should pass an anti-[PILOT](#) resolution regarding wind energy. Briefly, this very profitable business should pay the same tax rate that any other business (or citizen) does. So far [Jefferson](#) and [Oswego](#) counties have done this, and hopefully other NNY Counties will follow their good example. Such a resolution benefits citizens *and* Fort Drum.

5) Wind energy is heavily promoted as a financial windfall to economically distressed communities. As such it makes logical sense to fully and carefully examine the legitimacy of this pivotal claim. One simple and obvious solution is for every county’s [Industrial Development Authority](#) (IDA) to do a **comprehensive** and **objective** financial evaluation of all proposed wind projects. Surprisingly (as far as I have been able to determine), no NNY IDA has ever done such an economic assessment.

Note that when we put studies by independent experts into the economics calculation, the **net** impact can be **negative**. For example, indications are that the Horse Creek wind project (Thousand Islands area) may result in a net loss of some [\\$10 million](#), a year!

6) NNY towns need to pass a [well-written protective local wind ordinance](#), ASAP. When communities go before the [Article 10](#) Board, or the NY [PSC](#), essentially they will be defending their local wind law. If they have a weak (or incomplete) wind ordinance, they have already undermined their own case. A quality wind law is the best first-line of defense a NNY town has to protect the rights of their community. Some NNY towns have done a [good job](#) at this, but none have done an excellent one. The better their wind law, the better that Fort Drum (and their community) is protected.

7) Do much more to promote [Sentinel Landscapes](#) and [ACUB](#) in NNY. Basically, these are programs that pay farmers not to industrialize their land near a military facility (something like a conservation easement). If a farmer is financially distressed, they will be more susceptible to token wind energy enticements. If they can be compensated otherwise, hopefully they will not sign a wind contract that may have other serious ramifications to the community, and Fort Drum.

8) The response by wind proponents to the military issue is to use the tactics of the tobacco industry: when faced with overwhelming proof, simply [keep denying](#). They claim the [DoD Siting Clearinghouse](#) does a superior job of fully protecting the military. That is easily proven to be false. Because of how it was setup, and how it has been run, it is more of a vehicle to promote wind energy. (See my [report](#).) This needs to be fixed, yesterday. Right now the [NDAA](#) is the best way of doing this. Three simple changes on the Clearinghouse process have been proposed. Local leaders need to immediately get behind this proposal, as these fixes will significantly benefit all US military facilities.

9) Our state and local legislators need to support a NYS bill like [S1755](#)/[A5262](#), and a federal counterpart [HR649](#). Basically, those bills would prohibit wind projects from being within 40-50 miles of a NYS military base (e.g. Fort Drum). Some have said this is a tall order, but consider what happened in Texas – by far the most wind-friendly state in the nation. This year Texas legislators passed [S277](#), which essentially prohibits any wind project from being within 30± miles of a Texas military air base. If Texas can pass such a measure, NYS and the US certainly can.

10) We must insist that NYS agencies do their job. Regarding wind energy it doesn't appear that a single state agency fully complies with their mission. For example, the [PSC](#) is statutorily obligated to only approve *low cost, reliable* electrical energy sources. However, they routinely rubber-stamp *high cost, unreliable* wind energy projects! Our representatives need to strongly object to this dereliction of their duty. If all our state agencies truly complied with their mission statements, citizens, the environment, and the military would all benefit.

The [Tug Hill Commission](#) is another example of an agency that has been a major disappointment. Although THC has done some good work, they have yet to provide Tug Hill communities thorough and objective wind energy information.

11) Speaking of NYS, there is absolutely no legitimate justification for their [RPS](#) or its [CES](#) successor. For the state to mandate that utility companies use a certain amount of wind energy is an unscientific, undemocratic and unreasonable abuse of their authority. Would citizens accept a state mandate that 50% of the vehicles in the state be made by Kia? There is likewise no sense to the RPS/CES, which are just more lobbyist originated foolishness. (For example: there has been no scientific assessment concluding that wind energy will save a consequential amount of CO2.)

This [2017 study](#) concluded that the CES could cost NY citizens “more than \$1 Trillion ...with scant measurable benefits.” For several reasons, it’s actually an understatement! The RPS/CES is a major driver behind NNY wind energy development, so getting rid of the CES would substantially benefit citizens, the environment, and Fort Drum.

12) We need to do a MUCH better job of genuinely and sensibly working together, to protect our rights. Today our privileges as US and NY citizens are under a coordinated assault. These range from outright taking of our Home Rule rights (e.g. via such measures as Article 10), to the undermining of our very democracy (see [trailer](#) for the movie: *Grinding America Down*).

What our anti-American opponents are successfully doing is fracturing us into cliquish groups (by enticing us with greed, by promoting petty political divisions, by advocating unscientific energy and environmental policies, by undermining our education process, etc., etc.).

In my 40+ years of dealing with local, state and national issues, the proponents of industrial wind energy are among the leaders of the pack when it comes to fracturing communities. They know very well that “united we stand, divided we fall.” They set us off to fight among ourselves – and then move in to reap the spoils.

So, it’s our choice: fully and quickly adopt the majority of these sensible recommendations – or have our rights and Fort Drum inexorably eroded away.

Fort Drum will not likely be closed due to some major local failure to support it. Rather it will be death by a thousand stings.

Feel free to email me any questions or suggestions for improvements.

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8/27/17