

People Ask Me Things (e.g. About Wind Energy)

As an independent physicist and energy expert, I've been actively involved with environmental matters for 40± years. Since I've offered free assistance to communities facing a series of issues, I typically get 200± emails a day, many asking questions.

Below is a small selection of a baker's dozen collection of questions that pertain to NNY, plus very brief answers. (BTW I'm not an attorney, so my legal opinions are instead based on working with some hundred communities facing similar issues.) For more details see WiseEnergy.org, or email me any questions.

1 - "Is industrial wind energy a good thing?"

There is no scientific proof that it is. IMO we should be aggressively investigating alternative energy options. However, just because a source is "renewable" doesn't mean that it gets a free pass from scientific scrutiny. Before any alternative energy source is allowed on the public grid, a scientific assessment should be required, to prove whether or not it's a **Net Societal Benefit**. (Why just switch from one set of problems to another?) No such assessment has ever been done for wind energy.

2 - "But isn't wind energy better than coal?"

No – but that's a lobbyist made-up question. For technical reasons it's impossible for wind energy to replace coal. That question is like asking "Aren't bicycles better than airplanes?" Yes airplanes use a lot of fossil fuels, and bicycles use very little, and they are both transportation sources. However no quantity of bicycles will ever replace a single airplane, or even reduce our airplane usage. Likewise no quantity of wind turbines will ever replace a single coal facility, nor reduce our coal usage.

3 - "Is wind energy a major part of helping with Climate Change?"

No. There is zero scientific proof that wind energy makes any consequential contribution to controlling climate change. In fact studies by some independent experts have concluded that wind energy is a climate change liability.

4 - "Will the Horse Creek (Clayton, Orleans, Lyme & Brownville) wind project be an economic boon to the TI region?"

No. The likely result is that the region will have a net loss \$10± million plus 200± jobs, per year! This isn't my opinion, but rather the conclusions that almost anyone would come to after carefully reading several studies done by independent experts. Checkout the Horse Creek page on WiseEnergy.org that identifies several of these.

5 - "Will the Horse Creek project harm Fort Drum?"

From BRAC to radar interference, any nearby wind project is a serious liability to Fort Drum.

6 - "With all that, why is wind energy supported by anyone?"

Because our energy policies are not based on science, but are instead written by lobbyists. Some politicians support wind as they believe it's "green," and that all things green are good. To justify wind energy, lobbyist make a series of unsubstantiated marketing claims. Since the wind promoters know that 99% of the public doesn't understand this technical matter, they are confident that almost no one will challenge their specious statements.

7 - "Did Clayton hire the best NYS attorney available?"

The jury's still out on that. There are two basic choices available: **a)** attorneys who want a big piece of the relatively new lucrative wind business, and **b)** attorneys who understand wind energy realities enough so that they are passionately opposed to it. An attorney who is truly passionate on this issue would leave no stone unturned to present the best case against it.

8 - "How lucrative is the wind energy business for attorneys?"

It won't be a surprise that when the smoke clears that Clayton will have spent in excess of a million dollars on attorneys!

9 - "Should the objective of a local wind law be to exclude wind energy?"

No. The entire focus of a local wind ordinance should be to protect the "health, safety and well being" of the community. (The quoted words come from the NYS Constitution, Article IX, which lists duties of local legislators.)

10- "Is the draft of Clayton's Local Law 5 (LL5) a top quality wind ordinance?"

It has some good parts, but it's burdened by many serious liabilities. I've posted the details of the issues online.

11- "How does the draft of LL5 compare to the proposed Local Law 3 (LL3)?"

LL5 is a major step backwards. It is a much weaker version of LL3.

12- "Won't the Article 10 Board negate any meaningful provisions in a local wind ordinance?"

No. If you read the actual Article 10 Law, it's clear that the Article 10 Board has very limited authority. There are only two special circumstances where they can discard local wind rules. The proposed LL3 did not have substantive regulations that met either of those.

13- "What should the Clayton Town Board do now to protect the community?"

Direct their attorney to immediately fix ALL of the identified issues in LL5. If the attorney resists doing that, then they should hire a competent attorney who is passionate about protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the community.