

# MAINE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CLUB, INC.

P.O. Box 283, Augusta, Maine 04332-0283



May 27, 2010

Dear Friend of the Appalachian Trail in Maine,

There are several matters regarding the proposed Highland Wind Project (the Project) that we want to keep you up to date on.

First of all, the Project is the largest wind energy project proposed so far in Maine and would involve construction of forty-eight (48) wind turbines and related infrastructure across 10 miles of mountain ridgelines in western Maine. The turbines will exceed four hundred fifteen (415) feet in height and many will have flashing red aircraft warning lights that will be illuminated from dusk until dawn.

The Project will have significant impact to the Appalachian Trail and the Bigelow Preserve. The Appalachian Trail was built here in the 1930's and was designated as a National Scenic Trail by Congress in 1968.

The Bigelow Preserve is one of the crown jewels of the state's public land system and was protected from development by a citizen's referendum in 1976. The Bigelow Range was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1975.

The Appalachian Trail and the Bigelow Preserve are scenic resources of national and statewide significance. The section of the A.T. through the Preserve is particularly valuable for its breathtaking scenery, feeling of remoteness, and a sense of closeness to the natural world. These qualities bring thousands of visitors every year. In the words of Myron Avery, the Bigelow Range is "Maine's Second Mountain," second only to Katahdin.

Yet, the developer of the Project is proposing to place the largest wind plant in Maine within 2 1/2 miles of the Preserve and along several ridgelines to the east complete with 400 foot wind machines, associated roads and clearings, and flashing red lights while trying to convince us that the project will not have an unreasonable adverse impact on these important resources.

MATC met with the developer several times in 2009. Despite our concerns, the developer filed a site permit application with the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC) in December.

MATC's Executive Committee voted in January to oppose the Project.

The application will be processed under Maine's new wind power siting law. While the current regulations provide a more streamlined process, LURC is required to consider the impact to scenic resources of state or national significance.

MATC has been named an Intervenor and we have retained the Drummond Woodsum law firm to represent us before LURC.

Of particular note, the application was determined "complete enough" by LURC staff in order to proceed. The Commissioners recently disagreed, and upheld an objection by the Friends of Highland's Mountains that the application was not in fact complete. The application is on hold until the developer can resolve a matter of right, title, and interest. A public hearing is not expected until October or November.

LURC's decision on this Project will set important precedents on how the Commissioners will evaluate the impacts under the new law. Their decision will affect not just this Project, but also all subsequent projects that involve significant impacts to important scenic resources.

While Maine wants to be a leader in wind power development, it is clear that the law's intent was to also protect the state's "quality of place" and natural resources.

We are concerned that this project would set "the bar" so low as to virtually gut the test of visual impact assessment called for in the siting law.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Appalachian Mountain Club, Friends of Bigelow Preserve, Friends of Highland's Mountains, and many individuals across the state and region have joined us in opposing the Project.

We welcome your support and participation in these efforts to protect this wonderful place. Please check the MATC website ([matc.org](http://matc.org)) frequently as we will try to keep you informed and updated on a regular basis.

In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact us directly with any questions or if you would like further information.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lester C. Kenway". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Lester C. Kenway  
President

Enclosure