



February 21, 2014

To the Editor:

We write to correct misinformation in a recent news report regarding the Bingham wind project, which incorrectly stated that Appalachian Trail organizations now support that project in return for future land conservation.

We do not typically lend institutional support to development projects that have the potential to impact resources of concern to our organizations, and **it is inaccurate to say we "support" this project**. We agreed to "not oppose" First Wind's Bingham project, and **First Wind voluntarily agreed to help mitigate for their project's visual impact** to the Appalachian Trail.

We acknowledge that visual impacts of the project are expected to affect the Appalachian Trail, but at a distance greater than eight miles. Maine state law, the Wind Act of 2008, does not allow consideration of visual impacts beyond eight miles in the state's permitting process. Our organizations have tried to bring this law up to date since turbines have dramatically increased in size, but the legislature has not been so inclined to date.

In recognition of our concerns for future protection of the Appalachian Trail, First Wind voluntarily agreed to provide a dedicated escrow fund of \$700,000 to be used for Appalachian Trail land protection in Maine.

None of that funding is provided to our coalition organizations. First Wind also agreed not to erect additional towers closer to the trail than already proposed. Further the company will minimize nighttime light pollution from required aircraft warning lights by installing radar-activated lighting once the Federal Aviation Administration certifies its use by wind farms.

We believe this agreement provides the best achievable protection for Appalachian Trail resources.

The wind power policies of our organizations can be found on our respective websites at www.matc.org, www.outdoors.org and www.appalachiantrail.org.

Sincerely,

Lester Kenway
Maine Appalachian Trail Club

Kenneth D. Kimball
Appalachian Mountain Club

Ron Tipton
Appalachian Trail Conservancy