

FRIENDS OF THE HURON MOUNTAINS

Comments for L'Anse Township Planning Commission

Special Meeting and Public Hearing June 28, 2018

Spokesperson: Wayne Abba

- Our group has more than 100 members and is growing daily
- The concerns in the white paper we presented at the April Township board meeting (published in April 18 L'Anse Sentinel) have not been addressed
 - o Adequacy of the data supporting the wind farm proposal
 - o Environmental damage
 - o Effects on wildlife
 - o Effects on tourism
 - o Rush to judgment
- Continuing research has confirmed our concerns and added new ones
 - o When turbines come – property values plummet. Local deals are being delayed pending the wind farm decision.
 - o When turbines come – wildlife move out, birds are killed
 - o When turbines come – tourists don't; governor of Maine declared a moratorium due to tourism losses
 - o When turbines fail – fires have to burn themselves out; wide exclusion zones are needed to protect from problems like mechanical failure and ice throw.
 - o Emerging trend (e.g. Minnesota) changes tax basis from property to power output. When turbines are not turning, revenue is not being generated.
 - o Claimed “new tax revenue” amount has decreased by 1/4 from \$34M to \$25.6M. This still represents a best case. Decisions should be based on an informed range of estimates – best and worst – and account for any identified risks. If 35 turbines were built (the low end of the range) revenues would decrease by about another 1/3. The estimate is not credible and is inadequate to support such a major decision.
 - o Many people we talk to do not appreciate that their electric rates will not decrease or that power will be distributed to the grid.
- We reaffirm the recommendation in our white paper that we not rush judgment. Any decision to make a material change to the zoning code should be delayed pending resolution of concerns and input from agencies such as Michigan DNR and US Fish and Wildlife Service.
 - o Existing zoning is adequate
 - o We intend to petition for a Moratorium to the L'Anse Township Board very soon and we urge the Planning Commission to make the same recommendation.