

August 15, 2011

Honorable Benjamin B. Downing
Senate Chair of Joint Committee
on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy
Room 413F
State House
Boston MA 02133
Benjamin.Downing@masenate.gov

Honorable John D. Keenan
House Chair of Joint Committee
on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy
Room 473B
State House
Boston MA 02133
John.Keenan@mahouse.gov

RE: Hearing of Bills H01775 and S01666

Dear Co-Chairs Downing and Keenan,

Wind Wise ~ Massachusetts requests a change of time and venue for the upcoming Hearing for the bill “An Act Relative to Comprehensive Siting Reform for Land Based Wind Projects.”

Those wishing to testify—including members of Wind Wise who live in the western part of the state—include working people, parents, and students. The time of day at which the hearing is scheduled will preclude people from attending unless they are retired, self-employed, or out of work. As schools will have just opened for the year, the scheduled time will also preclude teachers, faculty, staff, and students from attending the hearing.

We ask that you please change the time so that it does not exclude so many. Other legislative committees—including the “listening” session Senator Downing convened at Berkshire Community College two years ago—have held evening hearings in regional locations to accommodate the majority of interested citizens and constituents.

Further, we challenge the venue of the hearing, a private facility in a remote location not served by public transportation, that will unnecessarily add travel obstacles for those wishing to testify in person.

And, it must also be said, the fact that there is an operating wind turbine at this location raises the unavoidable question as to whether this choice reflects a bias on the part of the Committee.

To resolve these problems of both access and perception, we recommend a location in Pittsfield, the largest and most centrally located city in the Berkshires. It should not be difficult to find a public venue in this city in which to schedule an evening hearing.

Thank you for your understanding. We await your response.

Respectfully,
Virginia Irvine (Brimfield)
Dale LaBonte (Brimfield)
Ellen Landauer (Charlemont)
Chuck Maier (Charlemont)
Preston McClanahan (Savoy)
Jane Pinsley (Blandford)
John Sears (Hawley)
Kathryn Sternstein (Hawley)
Andrew Wells (Ashfield)

On behalf of Wind Wise ~ Massachusetts
windwisema.org

cc:

Marc R. Pacheco, Senate Vice Chair Marc.Pacheco@masenate.gov
Kate Hogan, House Vice Chair Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov
Jennifer L. Flanagan, Senate Jennifer.Flanagan@masenate.gov
Eileen Donoghue, Senate Eileen.Donoghue@masenate.gov
James B. Eldridge, Senate James.Eldridge@masenate.gov
Michael R. Knapik, Senate Michael.Knapik@masenate.gov
John H. Rogers, House John.Rogers@mahouse.gov
Thomas A Golden Jr., House Thomas.Golden@mahouse.gov
Walter F. Timilty, House Walter.Timilty@mahouse.gov
Stephen L. DiNatale, House Stephen.DiNatale@mahouse.gov
Carlo P. Basile, House Carlo.Basile@mahouse.gov
Tackey Chan, House Tackey.Chan@mahouse.gov
John J. Mahoney, House John.Mahoney@mahouse.gov
Paul Adams, House Paul.Adams@mahouse.gov
Randy Hunt, House Randy.Hunt@mahouse.gov