

Public comment 17-2295-EL-BGN and 18-0488-EL-BGN

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I work in the public health field. An area of increasing concern involves pestilence control. Mosquito-borne diseases are responsible for an estimated 3 percent of all worldwide deaths. Likewise, there exists growing public criticism regarding the large amount of pesticides used in an effort to control disease-carrying pests that pose a threat to humans and livestock, as well as our food supply. Unfortunately, an often overlooked and unappreciated method of natural pestilence control now also is under assault. The industrial wind energy industry, through the use of wind turbines, has become the largest cause of mass bat mortality worldwide. Equally alarming is that recent studies looking at bat mortality and wind energy estimate that populations of bat species may plunge by 90 percent in the next 50 years! It was only recently I became aware of several planned industrial wind projects in the Seneca County area and after much research now strongly oppose these planned projects. Did you know that some estimates suggest U.S. farms save \$23 billion annually in pesticide and crop damage thanks to bats? Furthermore, bats have the ability to eat their own weight in insects every night, helping with nuisance insects and other pests that may transmit diseases. With increasing awareness and concern nationwide regarding diseases such as Zika, West Nile virus or Saint Louis encephalopathy, can we afford to further jeopardize a natural method of pestilence control so vital to keeping diseases from spreading? Unless we as a society are willing to accept the unabated spread of insect-borne disease and risk continued pollution of the environment through the use of harmful pesticides, we must protect our local bat populations. I strongly urge others that share in this concern to oppose these industrial wind projects.

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