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THE SENATE  
STATE OF NEW YORK



**ROBERT G. ORTT**  
SENATOR, 62<sup>ND</sup> DISTRICT

**ALBANY OFFICE:**  
ROOM 815  
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247  
(518) 455-2024  
FAX: (518) 426-6987

**DISTRICT OFFICE:**  
175 WALNUT STREET, SUITE #6  
LOCKPORT, NEW YORK 14094  
(716) 434-0680  
FAX: (716) 434-3297

February 19, 2016



Hon. Kathleen H. Burgess  
Secretary to the Commission  
New York State Public Service Commission  
Empire State Plaza  
Agency Building 3  
Albany, NY 12223

Dear Ms. Burgess,

We write today to express our concerns with a proposed project in Western New York. A proposed wind project consisting of seventy 600 foot tall wind turbines being undertaken by Apex Clean Energy, will affect both the Town of Somerset and the Town of Yates along Lake Ontario.

As we study the impact such a proposal will have on public health and the environment – consistent with Article X power plant siting law – we also believe that it is imperative to also consider the impact on the regional economy, national security, and emergency response.

The project's proximity to the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS) military operating area raises serious concerns. This issue has been raised by the Niagara Military Affairs Council (NIMAC) and echoed by federal, state, and local representatives. We have included resolutions adopted by the legislatures of Erie and Niagara Counties outlining these concerns.

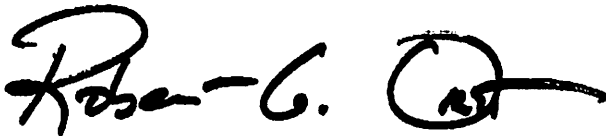
NFARS was established in 1955 and is home to the Air Force Reserve Command's 914<sup>th</sup> Airlift wing, the 328<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron, and the New York Air National Guard's 107<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing. Currently, the Air Force Reserves flies the C-130 mission and the Air National Guard has taken on the Remotely Piloted Aircraft mission. It was recently announced that the base will receive KC-135 tankers to replace the carriers in what can only be described as a tremendous victory for the base and its future.

As one of the region's largest employers, NFARS accounts for more than 3,000 full-time and part-time personnel and its estimated economic impact is approximately \$150 million annually. NFARS sits adjacent to an international border and is within the proximity of a population of 140 million. It has played a critical role in military missions abroad as well as disaster response here at home.

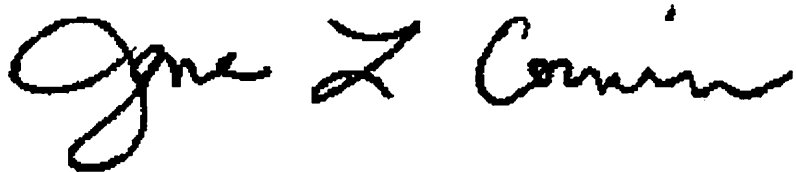
We have serious concerns that these wind turbines will affect airspace around the base and make it less likely to be considered for future missions. In 1995, the base was reviewed for closure during a Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC). It was again reviewed for closure in a 2005 BRAC, and again in 2012 during the US Air Force Structure Adjustment. With ever-present BRAC and restructuring threats to the base, we cannot risk these wind turbines jeopardizing the future of the Base and all those who are supported by it. Encroachment is one of the key factors the military uses when determining the future of a base and NFARS currently ranks favorably in that area. We cannot allow wind turbines to interfere with radar or flights and thereby jeopardize the future of the base.

Our federal representatives have asked the Federal Aviation Administration and the Department of Defense to conduct a thorough study of any potential impacts these structures would have on current and future operations at NFARS. We ask that the state, prior to moving forward with the Public Service Commission Article X, await the results of federal studies. Our local economy, regional emergency preparedness, and national security are all at stake.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Ort  
Senator, 62<sup>nd</sup> District



Jane L. Corwin  
Assemblywoman, 144<sup>th</sup> District



Michael H. Ranzenhofer  
Senator, 61<sup>st</sup> District



Angela M. Wozniak  
Assemblywoman, 143<sup>rd</sup> District

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