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## **Letter: Apex Clean Energy, state must respect towns' decision**

Sept 3, 2020

Recently, Apex Clean Energy stated Lighthouse Wind is an active project. However, the company's actions show that their Barker office has been closed since spring of 2019, and they have made no attempt to address recent concerns about the project.

First, a New York Independent Systems Operators' 2019 report indicates that three or four times more land-intensive wind and solar projects than currently exist are planned in rural regions over the next several years.

To put that into perspective, Apex alone has leased acreage for Lighthouse Wind and Heritage Wind that is roughly the equivalent to the square miles that make up the Town of Orchard Park. For Heritage Wind, Apex has announced plans to place turbines that would be among the largest ever placed on land in the United States and would be taller than any buildings outside of Manhattan.

Second, in April, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority announced siting changes that are to include a "first-of-its-kind" Office of Renewable Energy Siting. This new office would strengthen the power of the state "to set aside all local laws" and effectively eliminate New York's long-established home rule.

In the drive to achieve climate agendas and electricity for downstate, the transformative effect of Lighthouse Wind and similar projects will affect entire regions and be seen for miles.

Third, according to reporting by the Syracuse News, “Most wind and hydroelectric power is produced in Northern and Western New York, where the supply of electricity exceeds demand. But two-thirds of all the state’s power is used in the New York City-Long Island region.” Transmission lines between the two areas are already overburdened and budgets of every type are stretched throughout the state.

Clean energy is part of Western New York’s heritage. Currently, 21% of all jobs in Western New York are in clean energy. Somerset and Yates have made clear their decision regarding Lighthouse Wind. Both the state and Apex Clean Energy need to respect that decision.

Peg Schwabel

Somerset