

Wind Farms: More problems with InvEnergy Attorney Mike Blazer –

Argyle and Moore Townships, Michigan (ECWd) –

The last couple weeks, Mike Blazer, attorney for InvEnergy, has been the source of citizen complaints in a remarkable place. Blazer has been caught telling a few lies to citizens in Argyle Michigan. Michigan citizens took issue with the following fabrications of his imagination which he tried to promote as fact (video of Ted Hartkey's presentation below):

1.) InvEnergy Attorney MIKE BLAZER CLAIM: Ted Hartke, a victim from within an InvEnergy Wind Farm in Illinois was "fired from his job" as of 2013 about the same time Hartke abandoned his home due to the wind turbine noise causing sleep deprivation to his entire family. Blazer's source is an email from a Livingston County citizen who visited the abandoned house when a neighbor farmer stopped by and told the visitor that there was nothing wrong with turbines and Hartke "was fired from his job."

ACTUAL TRUTH: Ted Hartke's former employer, Foth Engineering, exited the boundary surveying and construction layout business and sold three company trucks, two robotic total stations, and a GPS system to Hartke who used the trucks and equipment to start his new business "Hartke Engineering and Surveying, Inc." in approximately May, 2011. Hartke continued to work for Foth as a subconsultant, and Foth provided services in return (InvEnergy's wind farm was constructed in 2012 and became operational in 2013.....so Blazer's claim is hereby debunked.)

2.) InvEnergy Attorney MIKE BLAZER CLAIM: Sophia Hartke,

(Ted's 6 year old daughter) got the idea to make a drawing of "No Wind Turbines" from signs like people would see along roadsides in Livingston County.

ACTUAL TRUTH: Ted Hartke was contacted by citizens from Livingston County and told about Blazer's claim. Ted thought that it could have merit, because there are some signs and websites which do have these images, so he decided to ask Sophia where she got the idea how to draw a red circle with a slash through it to indicate "No Wind Turbines." Sophia, who was 8 years old when asked this question said, "I got the idea from the "Ghostbusters" movie. Everybody knows that!" (Well, BLAZER is not smarter than a 6 year old on the anti wind turbine symbol origination.)

3.) InvEnergy Attorney MIKE BLAZER CLAIM: Ted Hartke's story not believable to county leaders, namely Macon County where Blazer's "E-ON Renewable's" project application was approved last year. While Hartke had only spoken to Macon County Board for a mere 5 minutes, Hartke was under sworn testimony in Livingston County where the zoning board endured 30 nights of hearings which included Hartke's 3 hours of presentation and cross-examination. As it turns out, Ted Hartke said it best at the town hall meeting in Argyle, saying that Blazer "was smoked" in Livingston County where Blazer's only recourse was responded by filing a lawsuit against said county board members.

After seeing Blazer's attacks against Ted Hartke (and an additional attack against a six year old wind farm victim), and also Livingston County Board members, the Edgar County Watchdogs would like to point out that this mistreatment certainly does not hold water with the citizens witnessing his tirades. Perhaps Blazer possibly thinks his audience is stupid and naive enough to accept whatever gibberish he spews out during his attacks and belittlements of wind farm victims. It appears he may be doing a poor job representing InvEnergy as it looks like the citizens have beaten

InvEnergy's attorney Blazer in Livingston County Illinois AND Sanilac County Michigan looks like another community which sends Blazer packing. It makes us wonder.....how long will InvEnergy decision makers continue to pay his wages for these service failures?

For additional entertainment, [refer to this article from Jessup](#) where InvEnergy is trying to build a new gas-fired electric generation plant situated too close to residents in that community. The comments to Chris Kelly's articles in The Times Tribune are intriguing. It appears that if Mike Blazer's mouth is moving, chances are he is NOT presenting the facts. A decision maker who enters into a deal with Mike Blazer doing the negotiating should be very cautious. We suggest that Blazer be video recorded and audio recorded to keep track of exactly what he promises and use it for proof when things don't work out as promoted.

Video (from *Concerned Citizens of Argyle and Moore Township*) of Ted Hartke's presentation and Mike Blazer's questioning below:

A Playlist of 4 videos from this event can also be found ([HERE](#)).

PHOTO BELOW IS FROM KEVON MARTIS FACEBOOK. KEVIN MARTIS IS EXEC DIR OF INTERSTATE INFORMED CITIZENS COALITION.



Please consider a donation to the Edgar County Watchdogs.

[wp_eStore_donate id=1]



File photo of Mike Blazer

[Boone County Votes For Increased Wind Turbine Setbacks Based On Property Lines –](#)

BOONE CO., IL. (ECWd) –

Boone County Board voted to protect their citizens this evening!

After NINE MONTHS of testimony and cross examination, and supportive votes cast by the ZBA, the full county board met and PASSED the following with a 9 to 3 margin:

All wind turbines must be placed at a minimum of 2640 feet from a PROPERTY LINE.

Waivers are allowed, which can reduce the turbine setback down to 1,500 feet from a residence ONLY if the host or neighbor

agrees to the wind energy company's waiver. 1,500 feet from a residence is the minimum distance allowed. The waivers would be negotiated with individual neighbors and land owners. Setbacks from roads or easement are now set at twice the turbine height.

Mainstream Renewables was attempting to develop a wind farm in Boone County, but tonight's vote by well-informed county board members effectively rejected the wind industry's claims that industrial wind turbines were merely "annoying" and not necessarily "harmful" at distances less than 0.5 miles from property lines. Mainstream Renewable's attorney, James Griffin, tried to make claims that the setback waiver would be "unconstitutional," but the Boone County State's attorney did not support his argument.

The specific problems with location of wind turbines near human populations are as follows:

1.) Health of nearby residents at serious risk: Sleep deprivation from wind turbine low frequency noise (thumping and rumbling heard and felt inside the homes of neighbors) have caused problems for many families. Ted Hartke, from Vermilion County Illinois, Cary Shineldecker, from Michigan, and Marvin Stichnoch from Iroquois County Illinois all confirmed sleep deprivation and health problems caused by wind turbines constructed too close near their homes. The Hartke family abandoned their home in 2013, 11 months after InvEnergy began operating turbines.

2.) Property Values: Homes situated near wind turbines are difficult to sell, take longer to sell, and sell at much lower prices than homes which are not impacted by wind turbine noise, shadow flicker, and "industrial" view of the surroundings. There is also a loss of emergency response. Wind farms are effectively "no-fly" zones for medical evacuation helicopters. If there is an accident within a wind farm, citizens may not have any opportunities for being air-lifted

for prompt medical care such as what happened to a woman severely injured in a car accident in Livingston County, Illinois.

3.) Turbine malfunctions, fires, sudden catastrophic blade failures: Wind turbine manuals detail that workers should “run upwind” a minimum distance of 500 meters (1640 feet) from a wind turbine which is on fire or in danger of blade failure to avoid the danger of flying debris. Wind turbine motors have a lot of moving parts which need lubrication and contain a lot of oil. When a malfunction occurs, parts can overheat from friction and cause the oil to catch fire. The weatherproof housings and turbine blades are comprised of fiberglass composite material. This material burns readily, and wind feeds the flames. Once a turbine catches fire, there is no possible way to extinguish it, and the entire turbine burns and blades fall off during the burn. Chunks of flaming fiberglass composite materials can fall and cause widespread field fires. Falling debris causes a tremendous hazard for emergency responders.

Special note:

A group of citizens in Boone County have created a website showing their concerns as a way to educate their community. www.fairwindenergy.org does contain a lot of useful information and also compelling video of victims reporting the problems experienced from living within InvEnergy’s wind farm in Vermilion County Illinois. We encourage everyone to watch these videos to see what can happen when county board members fail to protect their citizens.



Hartke and other Illinoisans testify at Illinois Senate Hearing

Springfield, IL. (ECWd) –

Today, an Illinois Ag Committee Senate hearing was held at 9:30 AM.

The hearing was for HB 3523 which is a “*wind energy agriculture mitigation agreement*” legislation. This hearing was presided by Senator John Sullivan, a Democrat from Rushville, Illinois who is the Chief Sponsor co-sponsored of HB 3523. His district includes Adams County, which does not have county zoning. He said he developed the bill with the concurrence of the Illinois Farm Bureau and the Wind Industry who support the bill. During the hearing, several Vermilion County citizens requested a small change to the language to clarify what they felt is a mis-interpreted part of ILCS 55-5/5/12020 section.

One noteworthy part of the hearing was when Senator Sullivan asked Ted Hartke a few questions. Hartke is a Vermilion County resident who abandoned his home 2 years ago due to nighttime wind turbine noise which caused his family’s sleep deprivation. Hartke provided a handout to all Senators which showed photos of turbines “looming” over backyard play equipment and all of the beds situated in his living room where they tried to sleep to escape the noise before finally giving up and abandoning the home in December, 2013. Sullivan’s questions to Hartke sometimes seemed like “leading questions.” A “leading question” is when the person who is asking the question is making sure that certain information is provided so that it becomes part of the record.

At one point, when Senator Sullivan was explaining how the new ag mitigation legislation will not affect a county's ability to establish their own wind turbine siting rules, Mr. Hartke surprised many in the audience by asking the Senator to repeat/clarify what he had just said, so that he could bring the message back to Bill Donahue, the Vermilion County Assistant State's Attorney who declared that lack of zoning hinders Vermilion County Board's ability to protect citizens from noise, flicker, and property value loss from wind turbines. Normally a person giving testimony does NOT ask questions or ask for clarification from the presiding officer!

Senator Sullivan was extremely cordial and re-affirmed that all counties using the existing laws had the authority to regulate wind farms with or without any zoning in place. He did explain he was not a lawyer and any confusion in the interpretation of the law would have to be settled by the courts. The next presenter was John Gebhardt, from Quincy, Illinois. Gebhardt is a spokesperson for the Advocates for Responsible Energy Development, a group that formed when Adams County was being considered for Wind Development over 5 years ago. Gebhardt explained that in Adams County, after the County Board developed the Wind Regulations, his group along with the Wind Companies and those pro and con approached the smaller towns who were going to be affected by an impending wind development. After having public hearings, three of those towns exercised their rights to a mile and a half buffer around their towns. Later, the wind company chose to go elsewhere for the time being. Gebhardt showed a Wind Regulation that was developed by the Adams County Board that would be null and void, if Vermillion County's situation would result in them not being allowed to implement a similar regulation.

He explained additionally, that one of the towns, Golden, did not have zoning and were threatened with a lawsuit, because they were told the same thing. But the State's Attorney interpreted the law that they did, so they implemented the ban. Thus far they have not been taken to court, which would be a tragedy, as they do not have the funds to take it to court. He mentioned they tried with SB 167, sponsored by Sen.

Sullivan to correct the language in the original legislation. It passed the Senate, but died in the House Committee – even though the original sponsor of the Legislation said he intended in the original legislation that counties and municipalities would have that right. This is why Gebhardt wanted to have these words added to this bill “with or without zoning” in the laws that govern both the County and the Municipalities. (These small towns do not have the adequate resources to fight a billion dollar company, and would likely fold under the weight of high-power energy company attorneys.)

He also provide photos of Wind Turbines on the outskirts of Shabbona, IL and other places and asked, would you want to live in or move to these locations. The next speaker was Lynn McClendon, from Danville, Illinois. McClendon spoke of the problems experienced with wayward attorney Bill Donahue who circumvented all attempts to protect citizens in Vermilion County from wind turbine placement. McClendon requested that HB3523 include a clarification that would remove the barrier set by Donahue which caused “paralysis” of his Vermilion County decision makers. McClenden referred to a document from the State of Illinois Legislative Reference Bureau, and Senator Sullivan asked to see a copy of the “LRB” findings.

The LRB report states, *“IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT THAT “ZONING BE IN PLACE” TO ENACT ORDINANCES CONCERNING ZONING.”*. ([Read it here](#)) This coincided with Senator Sullivan’s statements to Ted Hartke. Next up was Vince Koers, also from Danville. Koers stated that this change needed to happen now, that it was an emergency situation in Vermilion County where InvEnergy is planning to build an expansion onto an existing wind farm. He asked that the senators amend HB 3523 instead of waiting for the next bill to come around so it is not “too late” for more areas in Vermilion County.

The discussion of the meeting went long, and by the time the next 2 presenters finished, all of the Senators had left the room to attend other committee meetings/hearings. Sen Sullivan remained to the end and before leaving he shook hands and thanked every single citizen who had traveled all the way

to Springfield, some as far as 3 hours away, to voice their concerns about the problems wind turbines are causing in various parts of Illinois. There was at least one member of the audience who was unable to testify due to the shortage of time as Sen Sullivan was extremely late for his next meeting. There were possibly a dozen or so witness slips which were not read while the public was in the meeting room. We do not know if those witness slips were considered by the committee.



[Duke Energy's Shirley Wind Farm Declared Health Hazard –](#)

BROWN CO., WI. ([ECWd](#)) –

Tonight, October 14, 2014, the Brown County Board of Health voted to declare the Shirley Wind [Farm] a Human Health Hazard. The decision was based on a report of a year-long study conducted by the Enz family to document infrasound in homes within a radius of 6 miles of the Shirley Wind turbines.

The vote to declare it a Human Health Hazard puts Duke Energy's Shirley Wind utility on the defensive to prove to the Board they are not the cause of the health complaints documented in the study and could result in a shut down order.

It is time for Illinois county health departments to start receiving complaints lodged based on wind turbines since a Wisconsin health department declared wind turbines as a health

hazard and caused so many problems for families.

This is like having a swimming pool with no fence to keep toddlers from drowning. We should not be doing this to the children of our communities! They have suffered enough.

It is the duty of county health departments to collect information related to human health within their respective counties. Without a reporting mechanism, no collection can be had and therefore, the false reporting of no complaints filed will continue.

Information on the Shirley Wind Farm from Duke Energy's web page:

Shirley Windpower Project highlights

- Located in Brown County, Wisconsin
- Generates 20 megawatts of electricity, enough to power approximately 6,000 homes
- Began commercial operation in December 2010
- Supplies electricity to the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation
- Consists of 8 Nordex wind turbines



Photo credit: Better Way, Wisconsin

Wind Farm Decommissioning...Farmer Challenges Engineering Company –

VERMILION CO., IL. ([ECWd](#)) –

More on Wind Farm Decommissioning.....Farmer Challenges Engineering Company

Since yesterday's article was wildly popular ([link here](#)), and after receiving more details about how this conversation developed, we realized that it called for another article.

A farmer from Boone County (Illinois), Marshall Newhouse sent a strong message to Vermilion County board members which rings true for many rural areas being inundated by wind energy projects. There is not enough critical thinking skills or common sense being used when big money energy companies enter rural communities.

When a new wind energy developer, Mainstream Renewables, began an attempt to convince Boone County that a wind farm would be great for their community, some of the more sophisticated farmers started asking questions and digging deeper. Marshall Newhouse saw that it was obvious these machines were temporary with relatively short life spans. Since wind turbines have a very limited life span, the plan to install and operate them also needed to include a plan for removal. When limited liability corporations own the machines, it is reasonable to think that it is possible that the LLC's could abandon a project at the end of its financial usefulness. It is true

> >> From: Julie Newhouse <newfarm@xxxxxxx>
> >> Subject: BMcD decommission evaluation discussion
> >> Date: May 2, 2014 at 11:46:34 AM CDT
> >> To: john.alexander@ymca.net, edwinbarney@sbcglobal.net,
rmbowlto@yahoo.com, deereb41@hotmail.com,
ldavis@vercounty.org, michael_dodge@att.net,
johndrhr22@aol.com, foxdenone@sbcglobal.net,
kggdiver@gmail.com, pianogranny52@yahoo.com,
toddjohnson00@hotmail.com, RKPaintFarms@yahoo.com,
chrisleigh_@hotmail.com, mikem1976356@yahoo.com,
jamesmousemcmahon@gmail.com, mille107@gmail.com,
cdmockbee3@att.net, cnesbitt57@gmail.com, orickn34@yahoo.com,
tstal@vercounty.org, bstark@vercounty.org,
davestone59@sbcglobal.net, gweinard@vercounty.org,
ajwright@vercounty.org, bill.wright2012@gmail.com

> >>

> >> **Dear Vermilion County Board members,**

> >>

> >> With the Burns and McDonnell (BMcD) decommissioning evaluation available to the public, I took the liberty of reading through the document as they have presented it. If you as individual board members have taken the time to study the effort expended by BMcD you will have viewed a professional document that lacks a great deal of credibility. There are some monumental understatements reflective of true costs of deconstructing, along with some monumental overstatements reflective of scrap values made available as part of the deconstruction. By the final page of the document there is a final cost estimate that is devoid of any credibility.

> >>

> >> It is perfectly understandable why there is no engineer within the BMcD firm who was willing to put his/her signature to the document. If a licensed engineer would have included his/her signature, the firm would have been committed in many ways to the validity of that document. In my opinion it was the wisest of decisions to have every engineer within the firm distance themselves as far away from that document as

possible.

> >>

> >> Lora Hull is the author of the Burns and McDonnell Hoopeston Wind Farm Decommissioning Plan submittal. She is listed as a "project assistant" at BMcD. She is not a licensed professional engineer.

> >>

> >> The smallest amount of effort expended in acquiring real time quotes for labor, machine hire, trucking, scrap metal values, engineering requirements and a host of other services could have made this a valuable document. With the inaccurate portrayal of values on each of these areas there will be a monumental financial pit for the Vermilion County residents at some future point in time when the decommissioning of the proposed Hoopeston project arrives. There will need to be real dollars set aside in 2014 for real work in the future when these turbines are disassembled and removed.

> >>

> >> In an effort to offer another view of the decommissioning of the proposed 49 turbine project in Hoopeston, I have provided below an analysis of a proposed 200 megawatt project in Boone county. I secured multiple bids for each area of expertise needed in decommissioning of the WECS and went with the lowest bid in an effort to not over inflate the already high cost of this type of work. Please review either of the two attachments below. Both provide an in-depth analysis of the per turbine decommissioning cost along with supporting documents at the end of the article.

> >>

> >> My analysis of our decommissioning in Boone county was provided as sworn testimony in our zoning proceedings at the ZBA in Boone county. It was vigorously cross examined. The WECS developer was unable to refute it, nor was he willing to provide his own analysis.

> >>

> >> Please feel free to contact me if there is a desire to discuss any portion of my work.

> >>
> >> *I am at your disposal.*
> >>
> >> *Sincerely,*
> >> *Marshall Newhouse*
> >> *Ph. xxxxxxxxxx*
> >>>
> > > > > >

Now, after reading this, and after reading Donahue’s response to Darrell Cambron, we wonder if Bill Donahue works for what is best for Vermilion County and its residents. If there were a decommissioning cage match between a certain Boone County Farmer and a certain Vermilion County Attorney, where facts and reality determined the outcome, we would definitely be able to pick the winner and loser. Will the majority of the Vermilion County Board see it this clearly?



[Wind Turbine Decommissioning: Donahue Calls it a “Roadblock to Development” –](#)

VERMILION CO., IL. ([ECWd](#)) –

**The Future of Wind Turbines:
Vermilion County Refuses to Accept Decommissioning Facts;
Assistant State’s Attorney Calls it a “Roadblock to**

Development”

Wind Turbine Decommissioning is unveiled in Vermilion County, and the assistant state’s attorney Bill Donahue has closed his eyes. The lack of foresight and unprofessional treatment is rampant. When a respected member and leader from an outside community takes the time to advise at no personal gain, our Vermilion county leaders do not bother to respond. It is also disgusting and unprofessional to see personal attacks in an official county FOIA response. When will the county stop taking the questionable advice of this assistant state’s attorney?

In summary, the scrap value and performance bond does not come close to covering wind energy project removal costs. In reality, these machines will most likely be left behind for farmers to take down at their own cost. Farmers are advised to save all of their wind farm lease income payments to cover for the failures of the Vermilion County board to protect their financial interests. The lesson here is that one (or two) leaders can be placed as a bulkhead to put the success of a wind energy company ahead of protecting the rural residents.

This begs the question:

Are the short term gains for a few people worth the long term consequences for the rest of the community?

The research and facts in the decommissioning study (linked in this article) needs to be followed for wind farm developments. Licensed Professional Engineers and engineering firms (like Burns & McDonnell) should never endorse things which have not been verified. All communities are advised to verify the information provided by wind energy developers.

Carefully read the response from Bill Donahue. Will his words withstand the test of time?

Assistant State’s Attorney Bill Donahue’s unprofessional FOIA Response:

[Download \(PDF, 32KB\)](#)

Decommissioning paper from Boone County:

[Download \(PDF, 842KB\)](#)



[Boone County Board “kicked the can down the road”...](#)

BOONE CO. ([ECWd](#)) –

Last night, the Boone County Board “kicked the can down the road” on a text amendment put forth to protect its citizens from poorly regulated wind turbine installations. Boone County board members nearly passed a zoning text amendment which would have avoided the chance that a 495’ tall wind turbines to be constructed within 1000’ of a house foundation. These same wind turbines in Vermilion County are driving families out of their homes after being sited as close as 1665’ from the corner of the house.

During the meeting, Vince Green, representing Mainstream Renewables changed his tune when he realized his company was “on the ropes”. He said that his company was ready to come to the negotiation table to “voluntarily” increase setbacks from wind turbines in relationship to homes. His last ditch effort to salvage the marketability of the project showed that

Mainstream Renewables may only be saying whatever it takes to keep hope alive. Mainstream Renewables is known for "flipping" projects for a short-term gain. This scheme may be over quick as support for their project erodes at a fast pace. Mr. Green nearly "threw in the towel." Any potential purchaser of the project, including Japanese based Maurbeni, will need to test the water temperature before attempting to switch horses with Mainstream in the midstream.

Ted Hartke, from Vermilion County, spoke about how he used to support wind projects until the turbines near his home began operating. Hartke said to the crowd of approximately two hundred people, including Kevin Borgia, a small group of Chicago area pro-wind advocates and college-aged Sierra Club members, "I am sure that you are doing what you think is best, and you are just like I used to be. The difference is that I can no longer live in my wonderful home I worked so hard to provide to my family." Hartke's family moved into a double wide trailer 8 miles away to escape the sleep deprivation caused by wind turbine low frequency noise. His home now sits vacant until he and his wife work to recover or overcome their losses. Hartke's last statement was directed toward Vince Green's comment about exercising property rights and having to ask permission to put a turbine on your own land, but the reality for Hartke is that he asks permission from Invenergy, to shut down the wind turbines at night so his wife and children would be able to sleep in their own home.

Two of the board members appeared to waver as they reluctantly voted "no" on the text amendment which would have placed turbines 1500' from property lines instead of 1000' from homes. Ron Wait (a previous long standing Illinois state rep now Boone County Board member) was required to repeat his vote only after a fellow board member assisted him in pulling his microphone closer to his mouth. When the audience could finally hear his vote, there was a collective groan of disappointment from the local residents who were present and

had previously voted for him. Afterwards, multiple citizens approached Mr. Wait to ask why he had turned on the evidence. His constituents will likely vote him out in the upcoming primary. Craig Schultz, board member seated next to the podium was visibly affected as he cast his vote. He appeared to become physically ill and may have struggled with his decision. His next re-election may be difficult for him as well.

At the end of the meeting, both groups on opposing sides of the issue appeared to acknowledge that this will continue to be a long drawn-out fight which could end some political careers and launch political hopefuls who will be cutting their teeth on the toughest battle held within the borders of Boone County for many years.

Edgar County Watchdogs