

**BERKSHIRE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
1 FENN STREET, SUITE 201, PITTSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01201  
TELEPHONE (413) 442-1521 • FAX (413) 442-1523  
Massachusetts Relay Service: TTY: 771 or 1-800-439-2370  
[www.berkshireplanning.org](http://www.berkshireplanning.org)

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Executive Director

May 31, 2011

The Honorable Susan C. Fargo, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Public Health  
State House, Room 504  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Jeffrey Sanchez, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Public Health  
State House, Room 130  
Boston, MA 01233

RE: H.1511

Dear Senator Fargo and Representative Sanchez:

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, representing the 32 cities and towns in Berkshire County, respectfully requests that the Joint Committee on Public Health expeditiously report out H.1511, to study the health impacts of large wind turbines, favorably for action by the House and Senate. We believe a thorough scientifically-based assessment is needed prior to the State moving forward with the Wind Energy Facility Siting legislation (H.1775).

In developing our model bylaws for commercial scale wind facilities earlier this year, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission did considerable research on this issue. We found public health studies done in several Canadian provinces and other states but a basic conclusion we have reached is that credible experts do not agree. A 2007 study by the National Academy of Sciences on this topic stated, "low frequency vibration and its effects on humans are not well understood." The National Academy of Sciences indicates that ½ mile setback from inhabited structures should be adequately protective; other sources indicate that setbacks of up to 3 miles may be necessary. It is apparent that this topic needs a very thorough study before additional commercial wind projects move forward.

We encourage the Joint Committee to immediately move forward and report H.1511 out favorably.

Sincerely,



Nathaniel W. Karns, AICP  
Executive Director

Cc: The Honorable Deval Patrick, Governor  
The Honorable Benjamin B. Downing, State Senator, Berkshire, Franklin & Hampshire

The Honorable Gailanne Cariddi, State Representative, 1<sup>st</sup> Berkshire  
The Honorable Paul Mark, State Representative, 2<sup>nd</sup> Berkshire  
The Honorable Christopher Speranzo, State Representative, 3<sup>rd</sup> Berkshire  
The Honorable Smitty Pignatelli, State Representative, 4<sup>th</sup> Berkshire  
Mr. Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Secretary, Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Mr. Thomas Philbin, Massachusetts Municipal Association  
Ms. Jennifer Ryan, Mass Audubon  
Ms. Eleanor Tillinghast, Green Berkshires  
Mr. Narain Schroeder, Berkshire Natural Resources Council  
Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies