

September 19, 2009

## Frank Maisano: Bogus claims delay wind project

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- In an Aug. 30 article, the Sunday Gazette-Mail missed some important points when discussing Camp Allegheny and the latest dispute over the seven-year effort to build Virginia's first wind project.

Unfortunately, this issue could have been addressed had the reporter contacted the developer rather than just relying on one-sided views of the newly emerged project opponents in West Virginia.

The project, again which is more than seven years in debate and discussion, began construction on Aug. 15.

As for Camp Allegheny, while it is historic, over the years it has suffered from neglect, timbering and theft of the cemetery headstones by Civil War artifact hunters. It is located more than two miles from the closest turbine and will suffer more noise from the traffic on U.S. 250 than anything from the wind project.

As one who has been there many times, I would suggest that the camp does not "look much like it did in 1861." Again, the camp includes a neglected, trash-filled parking lot, a rotting picnic table, a trash pit, barb-wire fences, a stone house with its bright red metal roof, a modern rail fence along the pike, and damage from timber skidded through the cemetery.

Contrary to opponents' claims, the camp has not been a tourist attraction. In fact, not until opponents of the wind project now serving on Pocahontas County Commission recently highlighted it, it is not even mentioned on the county's tourist Web sites as a place to see, a point of interest or a "great" attraction.

It is true that from certain high-elevation knolls on the Camp Allegheny site, you may be able to look east and see several of the turbines two or three miles away. You can also look to the southwest from those very same knolls and see the Green Bank Observatory. To some, the sight of a large satellite dish four miles in the distance is worse than wind turbines three miles away.

All in all, the charges leveled and efforts to further delay this seven-year project by those new West Virginia opponents rings hollow. They, including Reps. Rahall and Mollohan, have attempted to stand in the way of developing renewable energy in West Virginia and now they intend to prevent neighboring Virginia and private landowners there from developing clean energy.

Virginia deserves a wind project, just like the several already completed or underway in West Virginia. It is time to move forward on this important project.

*Maisano is a spokesman for wind projects in Virginia and West Virginia.*