

Letter: Wind project will not impact Falls air base

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Rep. Chris Collins, a member of the business-friendly Republican Party, is all set to thwart a multimillion-dollar investment in his legislative district. Maybe he should check with the U.S. Air Force before he sends his proposed legislation to Congress to limit the siting of wind farms near Air Force bases.

The Department of Defense already has a program in place for working around wind turbines, including solutions for radar design and wind farm siting. Air Force bases around the country, including Minot AFB in North Dakota and Travis AFB in Texas, have been flying near wind farms far closer than the 40-mile radius proposed in the Collins legislation. Neither of these bases is in danger of being moved because of the wind turbines.

Like other branches of the military, the Air Force has a goal of using at least 25 percent renewable energy by 2025. Part of this mix uses wind power, including turbines on the F.E. Warren AFB in Wyoming and the Cape Cod AFB in Massachusetts. This, by itself, should disprove any issues between the Air Force and wind power.

In October, The News interviewed Col. Joseph D. Janik, the operations group commander for the 914th Airlift Wing. He stated that the Lighthouse Winds project proposed for Somerset would

have no impact on operations at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station. If there is no issue with the Air Force, why not take advantage of unimpeded winds across Lake Ontario?

A recent University of Texas study shows that wind is the minimum cost technology for all of Western New York. Less costly than using coal at the Somerset power plant. Less costly than a natural gas retrofit for the Dunkirk power plant. Western New York needs projects like Lighthouse Winds not only for the environment, but also to lower our electric costs.

John S. Szalasny

Williamsville
