

## Clean Energy Communities should support clean energy projects

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Once upon a time, I thought that facts were important in the shaping of public policy. In 2016, I found out how wrong that could be. At that time, Rep. Chris Collins proposed legislation that would cripple the financing of wind turbine projects across the country.

At that time, a combination of scientists, military and environmentalists refuted the misrepresentations of that bill and it died a quiet death in committee. Now, a similar bill has found life in the Erie County Legislature.

Proposed by County Executive candidate Lynn Dixon, her “Opposition to Construction of Wind Turbine Farm on Lake Erie” is contrary to the type of legislation a Clean Energy Community (a designation Erie County and Amherst received for committing to a resilient, low-emission future) should be sponsoring.

So much of the bill turns the process of the process of permitting a wind project into negatives. Instead of saying that issues need to be resolved by doing environmental impact statements, bird and bat (and other potential wildlife) studies, Ms. Dixon should be honest (they are part of the process) and not perform an Orwellian twisting of the facts.

As for the military impacts, leaders at the Niagara Falls ARS have already noted that the proposed project in Orleans County — which is closer than the proposed Lake Erie site — would have no impact on their continued operations and the military reviews, and has to approve siting of all wind projects so it does not impact their operations.

With a Sept. 19 hearing scheduled in the Energy and Environment committee, this appears to be a political challenge to Erie County’s green initiatives, including its continued support of the carbon reduction goals of the Paris Climate summit.

May the committee treat this bill like the Collins bill in 2016 and let this die in committee.

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