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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**OPPOSITION MOUNTS TO SECOND APPLICATION FOR BOWERS WIND
PROJECT IN DOWNEAST LAKES REGION OF MAINE
Maine's DEP to Hold First Ever Wind Project Public Hearing**

Carroll Plt, Maine - December 11, 2012 – Boston-based wind developer First Wind is facing growing opposition to its second attempt to build an industrial wind project on Bowers Mountain in the scenic Downeast Lakes Region of Maine. In a related development, Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Patricia Aho announced that DEP will hold a public evidentiary hearing on the application.

More than 1,000 people have signed a petition opposing the project. In a Special Town Meeting the Village of Grand Lake Stream voted unanimously to oppose the project. In Carroll Plantation, where most of the project's turbines would be sited, opposition is also gaining ground as residents learn about the downside of hosting an industrial wind facility in their community.

Reflecting the growing opposition to the latest Bowers Mountain Wind project application, more than 1,000 people have signed a petition organized by the Partnership for the Preservation of the Downeast Lakes Watershed (PPDLW). In addition to regular visitors to the area, the petition has been signed by scientists, state lawmakers, commissioners and conservation groups.

“News about our petition spread by word of mouth. The signers come from all over Maine, New England and beyond,” says Gary Campbell, PPDW’s President. “Most signers who chose to leave a comment say the Downeast Lakes is a special place where they come to escape the manmade industrial landscape. They value the quiet and the area’s clear lakes surrounded by forested hills.”

First Wind’s plan calls for sixteen 460-foot tall wind turbines on the hills north of the watershed. The turbines would be visible from many of the region’s storied lakes and eight of the turbines would be equipped with flashing red strobe lights in an area that is known for its dark night sky. Campbell adds, “Many visitors have told us that if the turbines go up, they won’t be back. First Wind dismisses them saying that they’re just afraid of change. But our local economy is heavily dependent on the quality of its outdoor experience it offers and we simply can’t afford to risk it.”

At the foot of the Downeast Lakes Region, south of the project area, lies the quaint Village of Grand Lake Stream. A popular destination for outdoor sportsmen, the residents have long fought to protect the region’s wilderness character from development. In 2001 they created the pioneering Downeast Lakes Land Trust that was recently profiled in a documentary entitled “Forests and Lakes – For People – Forever,” part of PBS’s Visionary series.

On November 5th Grand Lake Stream held a Special Town Meeting. On the agenda was a vote to determine how the townspeople feel about the Bowers Mountain wind project. Louis Cataldo, First Selectman and Maine Master Guide explains, “All summer long the people from First Wind were coming to town asking us what we needed, what they could do to get us to support the Bowers project. It got to the point where I thought we’d better have a formal vote on the matter. The town voted unanimously to oppose the Bowers project.” Cataldo goes on to say,

“Our local economy is dependent on our natural resources, which provide livelihoods for guides, sporting camp owners, outfitters and traditional craftsmen. We’ve always made our living from the forests, lakes and streams that surround us. People return to Grand Lake Stream year after year because of our unspoiled lakes, our world-renowned landlocked salmon, brook trout and bass fishing, the wildlife in our forests, and the opportunity to step back in time and escape the hectic pace and trappings of city life. We decided, as a village, to stand together and oppose this project rather than diminish all we’ve achieved through the Downeast Lakes Land Trust and jeopardize the outdoor recreation industry that is our life blood. This vote signals loud and clear exactly where we stand on the Bowers project. I hope First Wind, the DEP and Governor LePage are listening.”

Meanwhile, to the north, in Carroll Plantation, opposition to the project is growing despite First Wind’s promise of community benefits. A group of Carroll residents has formed a group to oppose the project, Carroll Citizens for Bowers



Mountain. “The more we learn about this project, the less we like it,” says John Miller, a Carroll resident whose home is one of several on Route 6 that will have a view of all 16 turbines. “We’ve educated ourselves about industrial wind projects in Maine. They create only a very small amount of irregular and unpredictable energy at very high cost to taxpayers and ratepayers. They do not reduce CO₂, they kill bats and birds, create low frequency noise, cause health problems, ruin property values and sometimes cause forest fires. If these wind developers have to build these monstrosities, let them put them near their own homes and leave us alone!”

As for the jobs that wind projects bring, Campbell points out, “Wind developers want us to believe they’re creating hundreds of new jobs but they’re almost all contract-length positions for construction workers from southern Maine. They’re not new jobs being created. In fact, in the Bowers application they admit the project will create only three to five permanent jobs and that includes the turbine manufacturer’s on-site staff. So the Bowers Mountain wind project with 16 turbines might create one or two permanent O&M jobs while threatening the local small businesses that depend on outdoor recreation. This equation makes no sense for anyone but the wind developer.”

Opposition like that aimed at the Bowers Wind Project is playing out across the country. Wherever developers propose wind projects that threaten valuable scenic viewsheds there is sure to be a battle. According to National Wind Watch, an organization that monitors the wind industry worldwide, well over 200 grass-roots opposition groups have sprung up in the U.S. in response to wind projects. PPDW’s website lists 14 such groups in Maine (<http://www.ppdw.org/resources.htm>).

First Wind’s initial application for the Bowers Mountain project was denied in April, 2012 when Maine’s Land Use Regulation Commission voted unanimously to reject the project due to its unreasonable adverse scenic impact on several scenic Downeast Lakes. After the state legislature concentrated authority for permitting wind projects in Maine’s Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), First Wind reapplied with fewer but taller turbines that PPDW maintains will have a similar scenic impact. The 48 MW project would have 16 turbines, 460 feet tall, that would be built on hills and mountaintops overlooking the scenic Downeast Lakes Region.

On December 7, 2012, DEP decided to hold a public hearing for the wind project.

According to a letter to First Wind, DEP's decision was made in the interest of fairness, based on the fact that this project is a modified version of a previously-denied project that was subject to public hearings. This is the first industrial wind project for which DEP has agreed hold a public hearing, as opposed to public meetings.

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