

FORT DRUM REGIONAL LIAISON ORGANIZATION CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF FORT DRUM'S TRAINING CAPABILITIES AND MISSION READINESS

Protecting the North Country's airspace is vital to Fort Drum's future. The Army is continually evaluating the effectiveness of its training installations and Fort Drum is measured against other military bases across the country. Any negative impact on Fort Drum's capability to sustain mission readiness, any encroachment on the land or airspace, exposes a weakness and jeopardizes Fort Drum during a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) review. If approved, the eight new wind projects proposed in the region surrounding Fort Drum, based on size and density of the turbines, will have a negative impact on Fort Drum and threaten its future.

It is a proven fact that wind turbines adversely affect the radar capabilities at Fort Drum's Wheeler Sack Army Airfield as well as the Doppler Weather radar site at Montague. Two projects, Maple Ridge in Lewis County and Wolfe Island in Canada, already exist in the region; they visibly distort radar and present negative impacts on safe flight operations for helicopter and fixed wing aircraft, as well as doppler weather radar located in Montague.

As the largest single site employer in New York State, there is no argument that we need to protect Fort Drum so that it remains the major economic driver of the North Country. Fort Drum contributed in excess of \$1.6 billion in direct and indirect benefit to the North Country in 2016. Thousands of jobs and the economic vitality of the region depend on its continued relevance to the Army mission.

New York State's Article 10 Siting Board and the Public Service Commission are considering whether to grant eight projects licenses to operate in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence and Oswego counties. These projects propose turbines which stand nearly 600 feet, 50% higher than the current 397 foot turbines operating at Maple Ridge and on Wolfe Island. These additional turbines will create massive dead spots on radar used by air traffic controllers and commanders tasked with training soldiers. If approved, these projects will add nearly 400 new turbines to the north country airspace, surrounding the post on virtually all sides and, most significantly, right within Fort Drum's main flight paths. The attached map highlights the size and location of the projects in the immediate vicinity of Fort Drum.*

The 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum leadership are responsible for protecting its resources; soldiers, civilians, equipment and facilities. The degradation of the Montague weather radar by industrial wind turbines has a dramatic direct impact on their ability to do that as well as their ability to train. The National Weather Service's (NWS) most valuable tool to detect precipitation is their radar. The lack of accurate weather forecasting capabilities presents risk to Army aviation, soldiers training in the field and prevents commanders from having current, factual information about the weather conditions, critical to protecting their personnel and vital equipment.

Fort Drum is already feeling the impact of the existing industrial wind turbines, and if the proposed projects are approved, Fort Drum's mission readiness will be further diminished. While software is able to mask some of the current radar distortions, it leaves blind spots in the radar, and the sheer number, density, location and size of additional wind towers will overwhelm the existing technology's ability to address the interference.

The increasing use of Fort Drum and its airspace for operation of unmanned aircraft is also affected by this degradation of radar and weather forecasting systems. Flying expensive high tech aircraft in an environment where there is an impairment of radar and weather information presents a safety concern to not only the military, but the local civilian population as well.

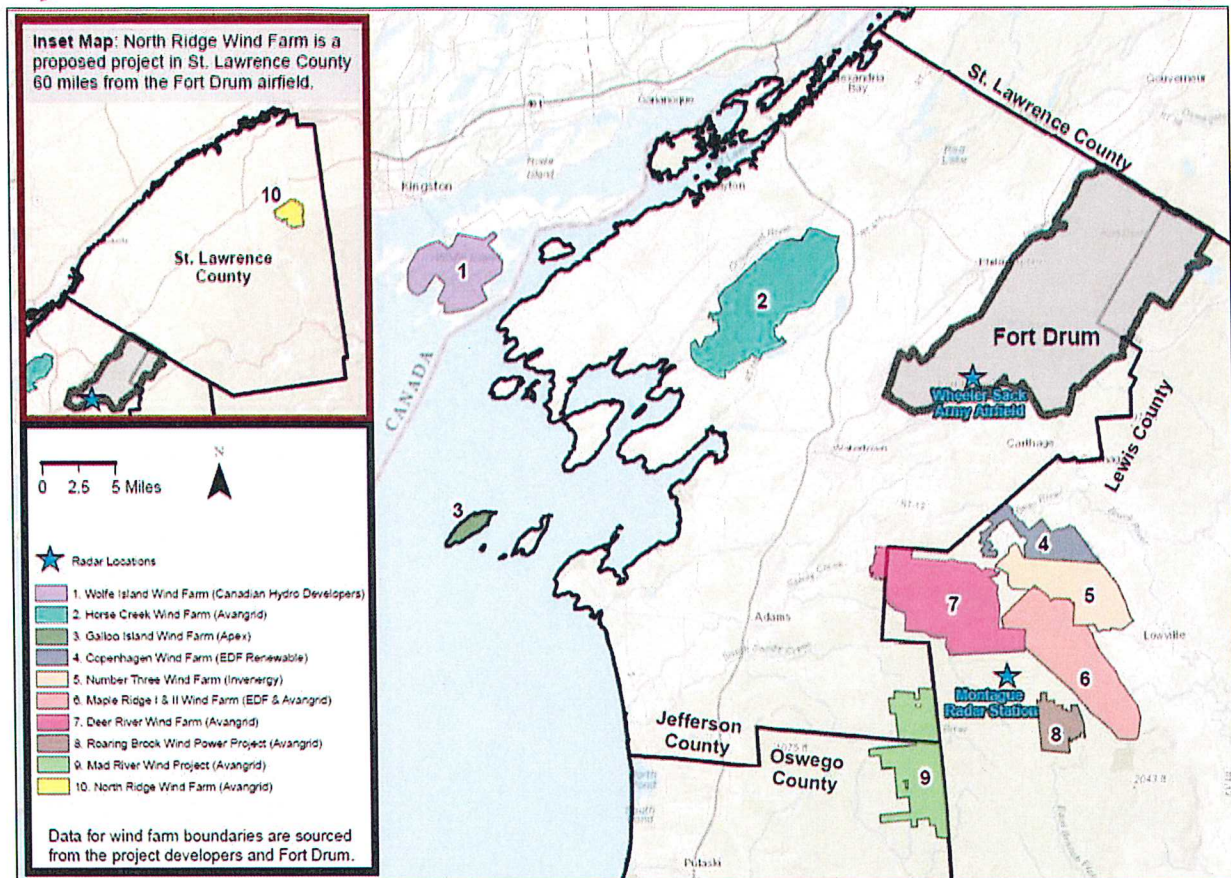
Fort Drum's open airspace and joint training capability is a highly valued component of Fort Drum's relevance to the Department of Defense. Aviation units from all service branches across the northeast utilize Fort Drum's airspace, facilities and ranges to meet their individual flight training requirements and participate in joint training operations. Additionally this training capability at Fort Drum enables the 10th Mountain Division to enhance their mission readiness through these joint exercises. Future training needs at Fort Drum and for the 10th Mountain Division have yet to be identified as regards to new technologies, new methods of warfare and emerging capabilities. We need to prevent airspace encroachments today that would in any way restrict future training capabilities or new mission opportunities.

Fort Drum has proven itself as a premier facility within the Army inventory and as a valuable partner in the North Country, a relationship we have worked hard to continually nurture and enhance. This is not an issue of renewable energy policy, but rather an issue affecting military readiness today, and Fort Drum's relevance for future new training missions tomorrow. This is an issue of national security.

The Fort Drum Regional Liaison Organization advocates for protecting and enhancing Fort Drum, home to the 10th Mountain Division. The FDRLO Executive Committee visited Wheeler Sack Army Airfield to see the effects first hand and discuss the current and long-term impacts with Fort Drum representatives. We strongly oppose the eight industrial wind projects, as they will greatly reduce the installation's training capability and thereby diminish the 10th Mountain Division's readiness.

Wind Energy Projects in Proximity to Fort Drum

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Map provided by the Development Authority of the North Country