

By

Molly Kealy

My name is Molly Kealy. This morning, while I was collecting my thoughts on why I oppose the Silver Maple wind energy project, in Clifton, ME, I was sitting close to my window overlooking Hopkins Pond. To be honest, while this is the most important cause in my life that I have undertaken to fight, my eyes kept turning to look at the magnificent view of the pond.

My husband, Harvey Walters & I purchased waterfront property in 2008 on the east side of Hopkins Pond in Hancock County to use seasonally in the town of Mariaville. We had traveled all over the state looking for a future retirement home on a lake. We saw many scenic lakes in our quest, but Hopkins Pond took our breath away. What did we fall in love with on that day? Simply put, the view from the camp, the deck and the dock. After chit chatting on the deck with the previous owner for 45 minutes, he asked us quizzically if we would like to see the interior of the camp. We really hadn't given it a thought; our enjoyment was in the moment and we didn't want to disturb our feeling of finding our new home. We tore ourselves away from the spectacular view to go inside where the views continued to astound us. In 2011 we moved permanently to Hopkins Pond to enjoy the peace, the solitude, the abundance of wildlife, the night sky, the kayaking and the joys of living on a pristine pond. We learned quickly there is a long standing, friendly joke on Hopkins Pond in which camp owners jest that they have the best view on the pond. Permitting five additional wind turbines nearly twice as tall as the Statue of Liberty will adversely dominate nearly everyone's view from their camps on Hopkins Pond. It will be even worse when we are out on the water swimming, kayaking, canoeing, boating and fishing, just to name a few of the activities enjoyed by not only residents on the pond but those who are fortunate to know about this slice of heaven.

Let me share what it's like to live on Hopkins Pond. In 2011 Harvey and I were married on our dock, by a close friend and pond neighbor, Steve Mogul. Instead of family, friends and neighbors gathering on our shoreline, nearly all of them arrived by boat and formed a semi-circle around us. It was a joyous celebration with an incredible view of the hills ringing the pond. For our bachelor/bachelorette party my sister, who was coordinating the event, asked what we would like to do. I requested a stargazing party on Hopkins Pond. My sister looked for a group that would be willing to bring their telescopes to Hopkins Pond and found the Acadia Astronomical Society based on Mt. Desert Island. The group arrived toward dusk, set up their telescopes and proceeded to point out the various constellations to our guests. When the party was wrapping up, the leader came over and asked if it would be okay if they stayed longer. He said they had never viewed the night sky from this part of Hancock County and were amazed by the dark sky. The night sky over Hopkins Pond is important to me. The notion that the turbines will have minimal impact on the night sky is a misstatement.

My husband and I observe the celestial sky nearly every night and the thought of having five pulsating red lights flashing every few seconds would destroy the experience permanently. If this project is unfortunately permitted, I hope an approved turbine lighting system which only lights up at night when aircraft is approaching will be required.

Hopkins Pond has statewide significance having been designated by the state of Maine In Maine's Finest Lakes Study with having outstanding scenic and shoreline features. For those who choose to dismiss this study by saying the study is no longer relevant because there are camps along the shoreline allow me to point out that nearly all the camps existed prior to 1989 when the study was completed. The natural beauty of Hopkins Pond is priceless. I tell my friends often that Maine is not making any new lakes and to mar the beauty would be a shame.

It's ironic that the town of Clifton wants to attempt to further develop recreational activities such as rock climbing and hiking while permitting an additional five wind turbines which in turn would expand the blight in the viewshed. I believe these proposed turbines would cause a significant negative impact on the character of the existing surrounding area and would contribute to the detrimental effect on our use and enjoyment in our greater community. You see, this wind energy project impacts not only those living in Clifton but those in surrounding towns such as mine, Mariaville.

I'd like to point out that the photo on the DEP application website in the folder labeled Additional Information December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 which was taken from the boat launch on Hopkins Pond is an inaccurate photosimulation. The photosimulation shows the existing five turbines on Pisgah Mountain as currently being visible below the Rebel Hill ridgeline overlooking Hopkins Pond when in fact the five turbines are not visible in any season. I would hope this mistake is not construed as "since five turbines are already in place, an additional five turbines won't matter." It does matter.

In closing, my hope is that DEP will make the right decision to deny SWEB, the Silver Maple permit.

Thank you.