



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

## Ortt Introduces Legislation to Ban Wind Turbines From Falls Air Base

ANTOINETTE DELBEL January 26, 2017

| ISSUE: **HOMELAND SECURITY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, AIR OR AIRPLANE**



New York State Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I – North Tonawanda) today introduced legislation that would make it illegal to erect wind turbines within 40 miles of military installations, such as the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (NFARS).

The legislation is in response to Apex Clean Energy's proposed Lighthouse Wind Project in the towns of Yates and Somerset to construct approximately 70 wind turbines more than

600 feet high. Local officials and residents have voiced concerns over the project and have raised the possibility that if installed, the windmills could put the future of the Niagara Falls air base at risk. The air base is located roughly 30 miles from the Town of Somerset.

**Senator Ortt said,** “The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station is too much of an asset to Niagara County and our entire region to put its future at jeopardy with this proposed project. We cannot risk hindering the air base’s operations, security and potential new missions. Our environment, public safety and quality of life are far more important than the negative impact wind turbines could pose.”

Senator Ortt’s legislation mirrors federal legislation introduced by Congressman Chris Collins (R – Clarence) late last year. In November, Congressman Collins introduced the “Protection of Military Airfields from Wind Turbine Encroachment Act.” It would ensure that any new windmills located within a 50-mile radius of a military installation would be ineligible for renewable energy tax credits.

**Congressman Collins said,** “The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station contributes a great deal to our region’s economy and our national security. Wind turbines built in close proximity to military installations can impact the future viability of our national security investments and potentially put thousands of Western New York jobs on the line. The legislation I introduced at the federal level, along with the legislation introduced by Senator Ortt at the state level, will ensure military bases like the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station can fully operate without interference from massive wind turbines. I am proud to work with partners at all levels of government to protect this regional asset.”

**Assemblyman Mike Norris (R, I – Lockport) said,** “I want to thank Senator Rob Ortt and Congressman Chris Collins for spearheading this initiative, and I am proud to have this legislation be the first that I sponsor as a member of the Assembly.

“The Article 10 process gives only a few Albany Bureaucrats the sole authority to determine the placement of most new major electrical generating facilities. While the voice of our local community continues to be ignored, this legislation takes a positive step toward protecting our military assets and keeps the brave men and women that protect our borders safe from domestic interference.

“In certain situations large wind turbines create concerns of military and national security and I will work with my colleagues in the Assembly to make sure that the Niagara Falls air base and the men and women that are stationed there have the highest level of security and protection.”

**Save Ontario Shores President Pamela Atwater said,** “As more data is emerging showing industrial wind turbines interfere with radar, we as a community have to proceed with the greatest caution. This is about saving an air base which is the largest employer in Niagara County, with more than 3,000 jobs. Save Ontario Shores is grateful that Sen. Ortt has taken a leadership role in protecting this regional asset.”

**Somerset Town Supervisor Dan Engert said,** “Senator Ortt has introduced legislation that will remove the possibility of any unintended impacts caused by industrial wind turbines on any military mission of the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station and it will put an end to this ill-conceived project and any other in Somerset. I applaud the Senator, Congressman Collins and Assemblyman Norris for their legislative efforts to protect this vitally important military asset.”

**Yates Town Supervisor Jim Simon said,** “I fully support Senator Ortt’s legislation to protect military installations in New York from encroachment from industrial wind turbine projects. The Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station has a positive economic impact on the Town of Yates. We are fortunate that the skies above the Town of Yates not only have unrestricted airspace

for low flying military aircraft and drones, but also provide unimpeded radar coverage for national defense.”

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2017-S1755**

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- Introduced
  
- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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**Relates to the location of certain wind electric generation facilities**

January 10, 2017

In Senate Committee **Energy and Telecommunications**

Sponsored by **Robert G. Ort**

Do you support this bill?