

# Legislator Pitfalls

Even conscientious representatives can get waylaid — particularly when they are dealing with a complicated technical matter (like wind energy), where there is a lot of money on the table, and they are being solicited by expert salespeople. Four major pitfalls that they need to be aware of, to avoid —

## a) **Losing Sight of their Allegiance:**

Some legislators inadvertently forget who they are representing when crafting such legislation. In our view their primary obligation is to carefully protect the health, safety and economic interests of the citizens in their jurisdiction. The material presented here (and on WiseEnergy.org) is from that perspective.

A more subtle problem here is the instinctive inclination of many politicians to compromise. But what is an appropriate “compromise” when citizens’ health is damaged, or their property values reduced, or wildlife killed, etc.? The only offset to such major concerns would be that the wind project would have significant, guaranteed, net benefits. *Yet there are none of those!*

## b) **Succumbing to a Sales Pitch:**

Once wind developers have targeted a community, they typically begin the process by sending advance-men to pave the way. These are sophisticated salespeople, who focus on getting support for their proposed project from key community people (legislators, selected landowners, the media, etc.).

The primary inducements are financial, and the main tactic used is to imply that this is “found money.” This needs to be seen in perspective. For example, would legislators jump at the chance to approve a prison for terrorists, just because of the jobs created and the additional property tax revenue?

Clear-headed representatives will also note two other things in the sales pitch: **1)** none of the financial incentives are guaranteed, and **2)** none of the claims are made from a NET perspective.

[For example, there might well be a few jobs added (no guaranteed specifics), but they never acknowledge the jobs that will be lost from this wind project (e.g. reduced farm employment, reduced tourist jobs, reduced general business employment [due to higher electricity costs], etc.)]

Additionally, there are numerous misrepresentations made by these self-serving promoters. To get a good idea of what they are — and the reality of the situation — please carefully look at [“Twenty Bad Things About Wind Energy”](#).

c) **Passing the Buck:**

A frequent justification heard is that some towns write only a superficial wind law, with the belief that county, state and/or federal agencies will be actively involved, and that they will properly protect citizen and environmental rights. *This is a poor assumption, as that is almost never true.*

[Such agencies would include: health departments, environmental departments, state utility commission, EPA, US Fish & Wildlife Service, etc.]

d) **Being Overwhelmed by Complexities:**

Industrial wind energy is a unique, highly technical area that local representatives rarely have expertise with.

When one researches the conclusions of communities that have thoroughly and objectively investigated this matter, some **forty (40)** different areas of concern have been identified!

[For example, citizens in Bethany (NY) wrote a [superior report](#) that spelled out some thirty-nine potential problem areas — and still didn't list them all. (E.g. they didn't mention turbine effects on military bases.)]

With such a number of technical issues to deal with, it's easy to see how even conscientious representatives can easily get off the path and into the weeds. That's the purpose of AWED's "Writing An Effective Wind Ordinance" document: to assist such citizen-oriented legislators in doing a responsible, competent job.

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