



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Robert G. Ortt

Ortt Seeks Accurate Wind Turbine Cost Assessment

ROBERT G. ORTT November 21, 2019

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Today, Senator Rob Ortt (R,C,I,Ref-North Tonawanda) was joined by his colleagues in calling on the New York State Comptroller to identify the true cost of the state's proposed subsidies for the building and operation of wind farms off of Long Island.

According to the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA), preliminary cost estimates for the subsidies to operate these proposed turbines came in at approximately \$2.2 billion. However, after a closer review and analysis of financial documents by the Empire Center, an independent government watchdog, NYSERDA's projections proved to be inaccurate. The Empire Center for Public Policy puts the inflation-adjusted subsidies, the actual cost to ratepayers, at more than \$6 billion.

"With such a massive discrepancy in projected costs, it is only logical to ask for assistance from the objective experts in the New York State Comptroller's Office to determine the true figures behind the subsidies as well as their long-term cost to New Yorkers," said Sen. Ortt. "Reports that Upstate and Western New Yorkers will be forced to bankroll the undetermined costs of these energy projects is worrisome. An independent audit of these projects must be completed to protect the best interests and pocketbooks of New York's taxpayers."

Sen. Ortt and his colleagues are seeking transparency and a true independent determination on the Long Island wind farm cost to protect New York's taxpayers and hold those responsible for these wind farms accountable should problems arise.

Senator James L. Seward (R,C,I-Oneonta) said, "Checks and balances, transparency, and accountability are crucial to ensuring the public trust in our government and preventing the misuse of taxpayer money. When billions of dollars are at stake it is vital that we know exactly how public funds are being spent – down to the very last penny. The New York State Comptroller's Office needs to step in and provide the public with a true and accurate assessment of this project."

Senator Daphne Jordan (R,C,I,Ref-Halfmoon) said "With New York State continuing to face serious fiscal challenges, most recently in the form of a multi-billion dollar Medicaid gap, providing transparency on the potential subsidy costs of wind farms off Long Island is critical. I agree with my colleague Senator Ortt that this information can help protect taxpayers and ensure that policymakers have objective facts about the true, long-term expense of this and other energy projects. Saddling upstate residents with these types of hidden costs is simply unacceptable. I am hopeful that we will receive the requested information and an independent audit as to the true costs of this project so we can better protect taxpayers."

Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) said, "Upstate New York taxpayers will be on the hook for the long-term costs of these enormous subsidies, for twenty-five years or more, to provide electricity to New York City and Long Island. It is critical that an independent audit provide the transparency and the full reporting that taxpayers deserve."

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