

Joe DeFors - Leelanau Township  
PUBLIC COMMENT  
10/8//24 BoC Meeting

I am Joe DeFors and I am speaking now as a Leelanau Township resident.

I retired to Leelanau in 2015. My background is in biology and mathematics. I have always loved the sciences and technology, so after retirement I became deeply committed to understanding and tracking the clean energy movement. Contrary to what has been stated by others, I am neither an expert, nor have I ever been employed by the energy or climate industry.

I was elected Chair of the Leelanau County Energy Futures Task Force and over the past year I, and we, have been attacked for our work serving this community. More recently, by extension, sitting commissioners on this Board have been attacked for supporting our work. This is a sad statement of affairs.

We all should welcome healthy debate. But that concept is predicated on two or more parties participating in a sincere manner, using facts and the truth as a basis for discussion. When the participants do not join in that spirit, then a quality outcome becomes unlikely.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS

When you run for public office, I understand that part of your challenge is to distinguish yourself from your opponent. However, one candidate seeking a seat on this Board has become a super spreader of misinformation and has launched a litany of falsehoods and environmental myths against the Task Force and his opponent.

This candidate falsely references the EPA and other respected agencies for many of his statements. Actually, most are derived from a paper titled "Grading the Grid" from Northwood University in Midland Michigan, that is closely associated with, and partially funded by, the Mackinac Center, a far-right think tank.

You may have heard of this paper before, it is often cited by climate and energy naysayers. The conclusions in this paper are anything but objective, and it should be considered junk science.

To understand the prevailing wisdom of 98% of the worlds scientists you should use reliable and respectable information sources such as:

The US Department of Energy, the International Energy Agency

Or, private entities such as Wood Mackenzie or Bloomberg Green NEF

Or, respected universities such as: Yale, Stanford, U of C and the University of Michigan.

Are this candidate's misrepresentations intentional, or are they simply the result of lazy research and ignorance? We can't know, and actually, it doesn't matter - because either answer should be disqualifying for the serious role of a commissioner on this Board.

Finally, I would call out this candidate as a hypocrite. He proudly cites his business bona fides from his employment with Pepsi - one of the largest polluters on earth selling nutritionally-empty sugar water in single use plastic bottles - at the rate of 200,000 bottles per minute.

One must ask, did he challenge his employer with his environmental concerns, or did he come to the movement only after announcing his candidacy in Leelanau?

***The perpetrator of these myths is Mr. Jim White, candidate for the 4th district seat.***

But he is not alone, we have a sitting commissioner who has a similar history.

This Commissioner has accused me of conflict of interest because I was listed as a consultant on our solar grant. Yet a recent Glen Arbor Sun article revealed she has enjoyed salaries totaling nearly \$50,000 a year from sitting on two utility Boards, and owns three oil and gas wells on their property - two of which are orphaned - but has publicly stated in this very room that she feels fine the people of Michigan will be cleaning those up for her.

This is the text book definition of conflict of interest, and this commissioner should have recused on all votes related to energy before this Board. But she did not.

## CLOSING

In this day and age, it is not a surprise that a small minority of the public will push back on almost anything - taking positions that are wildly at odds with conventional wisdom, science and fact. But it's different when those who seek to hold positions of responsibility in our government come from this group. They should not be trusted with these positions. Please support candidates who take the responsibility of governing seriously.

I closing I wish to thank our detractors. You have kept me and the task force on our toes, and you have gifted us with far more attention and media coverage than we ever could have hoped for without you.

Thank you, Joe DeFors

For anyone seeking to be better informed on clean energy and its relationship to climate concerns, I include a list of quality and respectable resources to further your education on these important topics.

### General Information

<https://www.climatecentral.org/report/solar-and-wind-power-2024>

<https://www.statista.com/chart/23455/wind-solar-capacity-outlook/>

<https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/faq/do-scientists-agree-on-climate-change/>

<https://www.dnv.com/article/the-big-idea-it-s-2024-and-it-s-time-to-debunk-these-solar-myths/>

### Myths Debunked

[https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1218&context=sabin\\_climate\\_change&utm\\_campaign=website&utm\\_source=scholarship.law.columbia.edu](https://scholarship.law.columbia.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1218&context=sabin_climate_change&utm_campaign=website&utm_source=scholarship.law.columbia.edu)

<https://cleantechnica.com/2023/10/13/nrel-explodes-solar-panel-waste-myths/>

[https://www.activesustainability.com/renewable-energy/debunking-myths-renewable-energy/?\\_ga=2.1864894](https://www.activesustainability.com/renewable-energy/debunking-myths-renewable-energy/?_ga=2.1864894)

