



No Assault & Batteries www.NABunited.org
PO Box 265, Wendell MA. 01379
NABWendell@crocker.com

We said "No Assault & Batteries" in Wendell and meant it: NAB Statement on the Battery Storage project cancellation

New Leaf Energy Inc's August 6, 2024 cancellation of their 105 MW lithium-ion battery storage facility planned for 68 Locks Village Road in the center of the rural town of Wendell, Massachusetts, came as a welcome surprise to residents of our town.

It was surprising mainly in its timing. For those opposing the project could not imagine the large industrial scale facility being built. It seemed clear: *dangerous technology, wrong project, wrong place.*

In an ironic twist, that very morning the local *Greenfield Recorder* featured a MY TURN editorial from Wendell NAB activist Laurel Facey with the title: [Wendell to Battery Developer: Just Leave](#)

New Leaf's reasons for their timely exit are unclear. But problems with electrical connections and delayed state legislation aside, the informed opposition of local citizenry, supported by local legislators and many in neighboring towns had an influential and persuasive impact.

Wendell citizens first learned about the project, introduced by the Borrego corporation in 2020, from members of the Wendell Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee who actively opposed the project.

Early problems -- and objections -- were ecological in nature. In an era of climate disruption, the clearcutting of 11 acres of carbon sequestering woodlands, the covering of 2.7 acres with concrete or asphalt and 780 lithium-ion battery units, along with related construction in a biologically precious location was not a reasonable part of a 'Green Energy Transition.'

We support solar, wind or battery build-out if done responsibly in terms of size, safety, and location, while actually reducing greenhouse gas emissions. And please, let's not sacrifice

Western Mass. biodiversity for energy consumption in Eastern Massachusetts. Conservation comes first!

Our opposition was not just 'in our backyard.' When it became clear that the project could not satisfy Wendell bylaws, the company -- now spun off as New Leaf Energy, LLC -- went directly to the state Dept. of Public Utilities and Energy Facilities Siting Board for a blanket exemption from all Wendell regulations. Corporate rejection of town decision-making raised a new issue -- defending local control and democracy.

Meanwhile, democracy was at work in Wendell. Last winter almost 400 signatures were collected on a petition to Governor Healey calling for a moratorium on battery storage licensing. In April, citizens gathered signatures for a special town meeting to consider a new general bylaw regulating battery energy storage systems based on health, safety, and welfare considerations. On May 1, 2024, there was standing room only in the Wendell Town Hall, and the Wendell General Bylaw was passed by a vote of 100 to 1.

From there it went to the Attorney General's office for legal review. But on August 1, instead of the expected ruling, the AG's office notified the town of a 90-day extension "to further discuss the proposed by-law's consistency with state law," with a new decision date: November 14, 2024.

So, dear friends in Wendell and beyond, our summer to fall schedule is shaping up and we invite you to these events:

NAB Celebration – *Thursday, August 22, 6:30, Wendell Meetinghouse.* With refreshments, updates, plans for future action

Wendell Old Home Day – *Saturday, September 21, Town Common.* NAB Joint booth with Energy and Open Space Committees

Wendell Full Moon Coffeehouse – *Saturday, November 16, 7:30, Town Hall.* NAB benefit with [Rani Arbo](#) and news about the General Bylaw

So thanks again to our selectboard, all involved town officials and residents and supportive activists and officials from other towns.

Best to all from the No Assault & Batteries coordinating committee:

Court Dorsey, Laurel Facey, Anna Gyorgy, Nina Keller, Chris Queen, Bill Stubblefield

Monday, August 12, 2024