

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Joint Petition of Green Mountain Power Corporation,)
Vermont Electric Cooperative, Inc., Vermont Electric)
Power Company, Inc., and Vermont Transco LLC,)
for a Certificate of Public Good, pursuant to 30 V.S.A.) October 22, 2010
Section 248, for authority to construct up to a 63 MG) Docket No. 7628
wind electric generation facility and associated facilities)
on Lowell Mountains in Lowell, Vermont, and the)
installation or upgrade of approximately 16.9 miles of)
transmission line and associated substations in Lowell,)
Westfield and Jay, Vermont.)

PREFILE TESTIMONY OF BONNIE DAY

Summary: Bonnie and Milo Day are residents of Lowell, Vermont and reside on property, which has boundaries with the proposed wind turbine sites. The Days will provide testimony with regard to their concerns about the impacts to their home, health and property value. The Day's will request that GMP's CPG be denied. Failing denial, they ask for appropriate protections for health and welfare.

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PREFILE TESTIMONY OF BONNIE DAY

1 **Q1. Please state your name, address, and employment.**

2

3 A1. My name is Bonnie Day. My husband, Milo, and I live at 606 Farm Road, Lowell,
4 Vermont. Milo has worked for East Shore Drywall as a construction supervisor for the past
5 fifteen years. I am employed by Vermont Commercial Warehouse as financial operations
6 manager, where I have been for the past sixteen years.

7

8 **Q2. Please describe your property and home.**

9

10 A2. Our property consists of 24.5 acres, with a house and a garage, located in the town of
11 Lowell at the top of Farm Road off Irish Hill. Our property sits on the west side of the
12 ridgeline that is the site of the proposed commercial installation of industrial wind towers.

13

1 We bought the property 16 years ago because of its rural beauty and peacefulness. As it is
2 our land, on a private drive backing up to timberland, we thought that it would stay this way,
3 as we grew older, and that our children and grandchildren would have the same opportunity.

4
5 We access our property on a shared private driveway. Our home is six tenths of a mile off
6 the town road. Our property is in a setting where we don't hear much noise, nor are there
7 any lights at night.

8

9 **Q3. From your property, can you see the location of the proposed project?**

10

11 A3. Yes, we can see the ridgeline of the Lowell Mountains from our driveway and the front
12 of our home. The lights from the test towers shine in our bedroom windows.

13

14 We have a view of the ridgeline from all three of our bedroom windows and also from our
15 porch, front yard, and driveway. The distance is approximately 3300 feet from our property
16 to the proposed site of the nearest turbine.

17

18 **Q4. Do you see the site of the proposed project from other property that you frequent
19 or from public roads or property adjacent to you?**

20

21 A4. Yes, we can see the site from Irish Hill and Route 100, which we travel regularly
22 between home and work. This section of road is traveled by an average of 3000-3500
23 vehicles daily. We can also see it from Route 58, which we travel often for shopping and

1 recreation, as do 1350 others who travel this road on an average day. (NVDA traffic figures,
2 summer 2007.)

3

4 **Q5. How would a project change the character and your enjoyment of your property?**

5

6 A5. There would be a dramatic change. At present, our property lies in a remote, quiet rural
7 setting. The idea of looming industrial towers, noise, flicker, and flashing lights in such
8 proximity to our property is extremely disturbing. If the experiences at Vinalhaven and Mars
9 Hill in Maine; Tug Hill and Andes, New York; Adams County, Illinois, in Wisconsin as well
10 as many other locations across the globe are any indication, wind-generating turbines will
11 have an extremely negative effect on the character and enjoyment of our property.

12

13 **Q6. Has your involvement in opposing GMP's project affected your life?**

14

15 A6. This involvement has affected me greatly. I've had many sleepless nights concerned
16 about the project and the effect it will have on our property and the quality of our lives. We
17 have spent many hours and days researching, reading complicated laws, rules, and plans, and
18 attending numerous meetings, all to get a better understanding of the subject of industrial
19 wind on high-elevation ridgelines.

20

21 The stress involved in the PSB process has been overwhelming. That, plus the fact that
22 public officials are so slow to recognize the problems inherent in putting industrial wind in
23 close proximity to homes, has increased our stress to a level previously impossible to

1 imagine. We have been fighting this battle for nine years. We have suffered harassment and
2 intimidation, starting with Mr. Wileman when we first opposed his plans for the Lowell
3 Mountains. The last straw, for me, was the burning of the Nelsons' barn. Before that, the
4 mean spirited actions were all annoyances, easily dismissed, like setting a junk trailer as
5 close as possible to our home, hiring a skidder to drive up and down a newly repaired drive,
6 placing giant cement blocks on the property line in front of our house. It had never occurred
7 to me that any wind supporters would go so far as to put opponents' lives in danger. The
8 thought that we were not safe in our home and community was more than I could handle. I
9 found myself bursting into tears every time I contemplated writing this testimony. Then
10 crying at odd moments for no reason at all. I could not string two thoughts together. This
11 was very scary for me, having never experienced anything even remotely similar. My doctor
12 diagnosed stress-related depression. I was shocked as I have never experienced anything like
13 this before.

14

15 I believe in property rights. I believe in public good. But no one should have the right to
16 impose such a negative impact on so many in the name of public good – especially where the
17 claimed public good has not been shown to be readily apparent.

18

19 It bothers me that individuals and small groups of citizens have to fight batteries of corporate
20 attorneys to ensure that the Board has accurate information, at our own expense and on our
21 own time. This is not our job, but, because there is no one in our state or federal government
22 standing up for us as individual property owners, it has become our job. As things stand, we
23 have to get involved to try and stop a poorly sited project in order to protect our homes.

1

2 **Q7. How can private interests be better protected?**

3

4 A7. As I see it, research into the impacts associated with industrial wind has not received the
5 funding and support it warrants. Regardless of the lack of support, there are more studies and
6 reports coming out now about the very issues that concern us as abutters and property
7 owners.

8

9 Here is a partial list of individual and group efforts to fill the gap in our knowledge of the
10 effects of industrial wind on the health and welfare of people living near industrial wind
11 turbines.

12

13 • **Maine Medical Association:** “Resolution Concerning Wind Energy and Public
14 Health,” adopted Sept. 11-13, 2009. Exhibit Day-1 [http://www.wind-](http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/wp-content/uploads/MMA-2009-Resolution-7.pdf)
15 [watch.org/documents/wp-content/uploads/MMA-2009-Resolution-7.pdf](http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/wp-content/uploads/MMA-2009-Resolution-7.pdf)

16

17 • **National Institutes of Health:** “Health, Economy, and Environment: Sustainable
18 Energy Choices for a Nation”, Julia M. Gohlke, Sharon H. Hrynkow, and Christopher J.
19 Portier, guest editorial, Environmental Health Perspectives, June 2008. Exhibit Day 2.
20 [http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/](http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/fetchArticle.action?articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.11602)
21 [fetchArticle.action?articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.11602](http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/fetchArticle.action?articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.11602)

22

1 • **Audiology Today:** “Wind-Turbine Noise: What Audiologists Should Know”, Jerry
2 Punch, Richard James, and Dan Pabst, *Audiology Today*, July-Aug. 2010. Exhibit Day 3.
3 <http://www.windturbinesyndrome.com/img/WindTurbineNoise.pdf>

4
5 • **Vestibular Disorders Association:** “Wind Turbines Can Affect Inner Ear Function”,
6 editorial, *On the Level: Quarterly Newsletter of the Vestibular Disorders Association*,
7 Summer 2010. Exhibit Day 4.

8
9 • **“Wind Turbines (Minimum Distances from Residential Premises) Bill,”** House of
10 Lords, session 2010 – 11. Day Exhibit 5
11 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/017/11017.1-i.html>.

12
13 • **Testimony of Michael McCann** on property value impacts in Adams County IL, by
14 Michael S. McCann CRA, June 8, 2010. Summary, Exhibit Day 6

15 There is more research being done and findings being made every day. The Board should
16 use this new information to avoid the mistakes that have already been made.

17

18 **Q8. Will the project result in an economic benefit to the state and its residents?**

19

20 A8. Although this project may have short-term benefits during its construction, in the long
21 term, the project will have a significant negative impact on the economy in the local area and
22 in the state of Vermont overall. Tourism is the number one industry sector in Vermont.

1 With our status as a geotourism destination, tourism is a critical economic driver in Orleans
2 County and Vermont's bread and butter. This project is not one that will, in any way,
3 enhance the tourism industry. People may come, once, to see an industrialized ridgeline, but
4 not to return, as they do now, year after year to enjoy the peace and serenity this area offers.
5 Industrial wind turbines will have a negative effect on tourism with both local and state
6 impacts. Moreover, a local property values will be negatively affected, especially close to
7 the turbines, with a trickle down effect throughout the town and region's economy.
8 Vermont is known for its natural beauty. Tourism is a several billion-dollar a year industry in
9 the state of Vermont. Tens of thousands of visitors return year after year to the Northeast
10 Kingdom to enjoy recreating on our waters, hunting, hiking, skiing, snowmobiling and just
11 plain relaxing in our serene and peaceful rural environment. This is Vermont's most
12 valuable product. These people come from all walks of life, all parts of Vermont, from all
13 over the United States and abroad. Many people enjoy getting away from the fast pace and
14 the ever-present industrialization of urban life.
15 People who come to visit and recreate spend money in the area, for food and lodging,
16 groceries, gas, hunting and fishing licenses, VAST registrations, outdoor equipment,
17 Vermont products and gifts, etc. They make an important contribution to the economy of
18 Orleans County. This project will put a significant dent in the natural beauty of Orleans
19 County. How many will return if we industrialize our ridgelines?
20
21 If Essex/Orleans were to lose only 10% of rooms and meals sales from our 2008 level, it
22 would amount to a 3.5 million dollar hit on our already struggling economy. (State of
23 Vermont Department of Taxes Meals and Rooms Statistics, 2008.)

1

2 The striking and startling visibility of industrial wind towers will impact countless areas
3 surrounding the project site. From places such as Jay Peak, the Long Trail, the Catamount
4 Trail and, the Bailey Hazen Military Highway, the turbines will be starkly visible. These
5 areas all have panoramic views of the natural ridgeline of the proposed site. All these areas
6 are used heavily for recreation by both Vermonters and tourists and have been written up in
7 guidebooks.

8

9 Without a doubt, if the project is built, there will be a negative impact on the amount of
10 money spent in this area and in the state. Residents and nonresidents who have used the area
11 in the past for outdoor recreation will go elsewhere for their activities. If “elsewhere” means
12 out of state, this would result in a loss of revenue for our region and the state.

13

14

15 **Q9. What other the negative effects do you foresee if this project is built?**

16 A9. Based on the experience of other rural communities near wind developments, problems
17 of strong concern include:

18 A large number of aesthetic impacts

19 Interference with TV reception.

20 Microwave reception interference.

21 Depreciating property values.

22 Flashing red lights (FAA) interfering with use and enjoyment of homes and properties.

23 Wind turbine NOISE which will interfere with our sleep and mental health.

- 1 Road damage.
- 2 Cascading shadow flicker from the blades in a rising or setting sun.
- 3 Rotating shadows in nearby homes.
- 4 Concerns about stray voltage.
- 5 Concerns about increased lightening strikes.
- 6 Wildlife habitat fragmentation and destruction.
- 7 Environmental damage to surface and sub surface waters.
- 8 Bird, bat and raptor mortality.
- 9 Domestic and farm animal health concerns.

10

11 Proponents for wind energy dismiss all these concerns, stating that they don't occur.
12 However, they offer no proof in the face of increasing evidence that all of the above are
13 causing problems and legitimate concerns in and around operating wind developments.

14

15 Some of these concerns are described in more detail in the following subsections.

16

17 **Q10. Will property values be affected?**

18

19 A10. The Impact of Wind Power Projects on Residential Property Values in the United

20 States: A Multi-Site Hedonic Analysis" Hoen, B., R. Wiser, P. Cappers, M. Thayer, and G.

21 Sethi. LBNL-2829E, December 2009, is the research that the wind industry likes to point to

22 as proof that property values are unaffected by big wind developments. Yet a Power

23 Magazine article ("for more than 127 years *POWER* magazine has been considered the

1 definitive information source for the power generation market”) entitled “**Wind and**
2 **Property Values: Relation Unknown,**” by Kennedy Maize, February 15, 2010 quotes
3 Albert R. Wilson, a national expert on real estate valuation, who got wind of the study,
4 looked at it, and found its methodology dodgy.

5 *“Wilson says he has “no opinion on the influence of wind farms on residential*
6 *sales prices.” But his concerns with methodology lead him to argue that the*
7 *LBNL report “should not be given serious consideration for any policy*
8 *purpose. The underlying methods cannot be show to be reliable or*
9 *accurate.””*

10 (www.powermag.com/blog/index.php/2010/02/16/wind-and-property-values-relation-
11 [unknown/](http://www.powermag.com/blog/index.php/2010/02/16/wind-and-property-values-relation-))

12
13 I am concerned about my own property being devalued due to the visual and noise impacts
14 from an industrial development adjacent to our property. Also, I would lose the rural
15 character and tranquility of my property.

16
17 Industrial wind towers looming over my property would impact the number of prospective
18 buyers should I decide to leave. Anyone who would be interested would have to want an
19 industrial facility in his or her backyard. They would be able to use the facility as a
20 bargaining chip to devalue my property.

21
22 Such declines in sales and property values would have a serious effect on the town’s grand
23 list and tax rate. In small towns such as Lowell, any tax impact has wide-ranging effects.

1

2 Using 2010 Vermont equalized education grand list figures one can calculate that if Orleans
3 County were to lose 25% of property value, the education tax would take a loss of close to
4 1.5 million.

5

6 There have been property value studies done that support both sides of the property value
7 debate. Studies financed by developers and the government generally project no decrease in
8 value. Studies by opponents project decreases in value ranging from 10% to 50%. I
9 respectfully request a “real property value protection plan,” as some communities have
10 established as part of negotiating with wind developers. A protection plan of this nature
11 should be considered in the proposed project on the Lowell Mountains, with clauses that
12 include:

13 Compensation to individuals for effects that cannot be mitigated.

14 Property value protection assurance.

15 Buyout for properties negatively affected.

16 Compensation for landowners for the costs of closing on a new home and moving.

17 Compensation for the financial and emotional turmoil of being driven from homes.

18 A bond to insure compliance.

19

20 If GMP’s experts are correct and property values remain stable or increase, GMP stands to
21 lose nothing. If, however, they are wrong, without this type of protection we will lose so
22 much that we have worked for all our lives.

23

1 **Q11. Are you concerned about noise and sound?**

2

3 A11. This is my most profound concern. Problems with sound have been reported in areas of
4 the US as diverse as: Brownsville and Kewanee County in Wisconsin; Union, Oregon;
5 Saginaw, Texas; DeKalb and Adams Counties, Illinois; Meyersdale and Waymart Wind,
6 Pennsylvania; Backbone Mountain, West Virginia; Mackinaw City, Michigan; King City,
7 Missouri; Falmouth, Massachusetts; and Vinalhaven and Mars Hill in Maine. Yet developers
8 continue to assert that there will be no problem with sound at THEIR development. Some
9 utilities commissions continue to believe these assertions, while others have begun to
10 question them. For example: Wisconsin PSC Commissioner Lauren Azar's has
11 recommended added protection for those harmed by wind turbines.

12

13 **Q12. What setbacks do you see as ideal?**

14 A12. The state of Illinois is the leader in including setbacks and Property value guarantees as
15 part of permitting for wind development. This has gone a long way toward relieving the
16 apprehension of neighbors near wind development, as I think it would here in Vermont.

17

18 Wisconsin Public Service Commission has been examining state guidelines for uniform
19 siting of wind facilities. The commission's expert, Herbert S. Cussons, MD, recommends 1
20 mile in rural settings, because of health considerations. Exhibit Day 7.

21 [http://www.bccrwe.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=113:health-](http://www.bccrwe.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=113:health-impact-and-setback-guidelines-for-wind-siting-council-&catid=42:health-and-wellness&Itemid=54)
22 [impact-and-setback-guidelines-for-wind-siting-council-&catid=42:health-and-](http://www.bccrwe.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=113:health-impact-and-setback-guidelines-for-wind-siting-council-&catid=42:health-and-wellness&Itemid=54)
23 [wellness&Itemid=54](http://www.bccrwe.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=113:health-impact-and-setback-guidelines-for-wind-siting-council-&catid=42:health-and-wellness&Itemid=54)

1

2 Adams County, IL. Michael McCann, CRA recommends 2 miles, owing to impacts of noise
3 and health on property values. He further recommends that if the wind project is less than 2
4 miles from homes there should be property-value guarantees and bonding. Exhibit Day 8.

5

6 In England, the House of Lords is debating the “Wind Turbines (Minimum Distances from
7 Residential Premises) Bill, which calls for 3000-m (9842.52 feet or 1.86 mile) setback for
8 turbines the size of those proposed for the Lowell Mountains. Exhibit Day-5

9

10 For the Lowell Mountains, project setbacks should be a minimum of one and a half miles
11 based on the above information.

12

13 **Q13. What other local economic effects do you want to address?**

14

15 A13. If the project were approved, some money would be spent in the area during
16 construction, but that effect would be short-lived - less than one construction season. Except
17 for plowing the roads, there is no promise of permanent jobs to be created by the project.
18 The Vermont Department of Public Service has acknowledged this in their report “Economic
19 Impacts of Vermont’s Feed in Tariffs.” Meanwhile we can expect jobs will be lost as the
20 tourist industry fades from the area.

21

1 **Q14. Will the project have an undue adverse effect on the aesthetics in the area and on**
2 **your property in particular?**

3

4 A14. Absolutely. Anyone who thinks that placing towers on the ridgelines would not have
5 an undue adverse impact on aesthetics is seriously misguided. These huge man-made
6 structures are going to stick out like a sore thumb on this beautiful undeveloped ridgeline.

7 This is especially true here in the Northeast Kingdom, where the view-sheds are so vast and
8 expansive.

9

10 The lights that will be required on the turbines will also affect us. Before, on a clear moonlit
11 night, the sky studded with stars was absolutely beautiful and not influenced by any artificial
12 light. Now the lights on the met towers draw the eyes. The lighted turbines will totally
13 disrupt the natural dark nights that we are so accustomed to and treasure. Also, on nights that
14 are clouded over, the lights will bounce off the low cloud cover and be even more offensive.

15

16 **Sheri Kimbrough**, Conservationist, writer, photographer from the Casper, Wyoming
17 area - says in her essay” conservation thoughts from one who never planned on being a
18 conservationist”

19

20 *“If wind power is the answer, then the question must be “How can we do the most*
21 *environmental damage, with the least results and for the most cost?”*

22

1 I think this is an excellent observation that applies to our discussion of the Lowell Mountains
2 project.

3

4 **Q15. Do you believe that GMP should be granted a Certificate of Public Good?**

5

6 A15. No. It is my belief that a project of this scale is going to impact not just people in close
7 proximity to the project but all around it, reaching to many other towns here in the NEK,
8 impacting private home owners and businesses.

9

10 I believe that there is a serious lack of accountability in the way wind is being developed, in
11 Vermont. There are no penalties for making promotional claims that developers and projects
12 do not deliver.

13

14 Although wind turbines produce electricity intermittently, *they consume it continuously*, with
15 no requirement for documenting the net output of electricity. This is a piece that is missing
16 in calculating the overall economic effects of wind-generating installations. This oversight
17 needs to be addressed.

18

19 One of GMP's experts, David Raphael, told us at a public meeting in Lowell that this
20 industrial development close to our homes will increase the value of our property. I
21 respectfully recommend that the developers "put their money where their mouth is," with a
22 property-value guarantee program for any adjoining landowners who are adversely affected
23 by this project.

1

2 This region is very special and unique because of the vast panoramic view-sheds and rolling
3 natural ridgelines. To tear down acres of forestland for a network of new roads and to place
4 enormous, lighted, man-made structures all along the ridgelines would be more of a loss than
5 a gain to the state of Vermont.

6

7 Thousands of people, both Vermonters and visitors, come to this part of Vermont for what
8 we have to offer: our natural beauty. Let us preserve that beauty for our children and
9 grandchildren.

10

11 **Q16. Do you have anything to add?**

12

13 A16. Yes, I want to share the following quotes from noted people in the ongoing
14 conversation about wind development.

15

16 Pete Laux, Sounding Off, Acoustics By Design blog of acoustics, noise, vibration & audio-
17 visual systems, August 19, 2009.

18

*“In a democracy, we trust our representatives to protect the rights and well-
19 being of each individual and to protect each person and their property from
20 irreparable harm.”*

21

22

*“At Acoustics By Design, we pride ourselves in solving the human side of the
23 equation when it comes to noise control and the human perception of sound.*

1 *One of our goals is to participate in the research and development end of this*
2 *debate, so we can establish appropriate standardized guidelines for wind*
3 *turbine noise. Even though wind turbine energy will never be a “free lunch”*
4 *per se, we want to help make it as “free” as possible, with broad community*
5 *acceptance.”*

6
7 Noted environmentalist, Jon Boone has been a formal intervener in two Maryland Public
8 Service Commission hearings. He produced and directed the documentary, Life Under a
9 Windplant, which has been freely distributed within the United States and many countries
10 throughout the world. He also developed the website Stop Ill Wind, www.stopillwind.org,
11 where anyone can read his complete direct testimony, with many related documents, in the
12 Synergics wind case before the Maryland Public Service Commission. Two years ago, his
13 essay, The Aesthetic Dissonance of Industrial Wind Machines, was published in the journal
14 Contemporary Aesthetics. His speech, The Wayward Wind, will be published next year by
15 McGraw Hill, as well as his recent scholarly essay, Less for More: The Rube Goldberg
16 Nature of Industrial Wind Development. A lifelong environmentalist, he helped found the
17 North American Bluebird Society. He had a 30-year career as an academic administrator
18 with the University of Maryland and is now a painter who receives no income from his work
19 on wind technology.

20
21 He seeks informed, effective public policy--and an environmentalism that eschews wishful
22 thinking because it is aware of the unintended adverse consequences flowing from
23 uninformed decisions.

1

2 The following quote from Jon Boone addresses concerns we share:

3 *“Unless Congress and the relevant regulatory agencies work in concert to*
4 *restructure financial incentives for the wind industry—emphasizing an optimal fit*
5 *with the environment rather than maximizing profits, the public interest will not be*
6 *served. Responsible wind citizenship means that those who lead and support the*
7 *industry would seek, among other things:*

8 *Appropriate siting criteria, environmental review, natural resource oversight, and*
9 *full public participation at every level, especially at the beginning of the process.*
10 *Such a review would investigate thoroughly little understand problems related to*
11 *such phenomena as electrical discharge through the ground.*

12 *Development that steers away from little-disturbed natural areas like contiguous*
13 *forested ridge tops and toward settled areas such as farm fields and strip mines, with*
14 *substantial set-back requirements to avoid inflicting noise and strobing effects on*
15 *residents.*

16 *Site planning that does not intrude upon historical natural views or disturb nearby*
17 *residents.*

18 *Federal and state tax incentives for wind that are indexed to actual reductions in the*
19 *mining and combustion of fossil fuels”*

1 John Zimmerman, president of Vermont Environmental Research Associates and one of
2 GMP's experts in this current petition, has long been associated with the development and
3 permitting of commercial wind-power facilities. As long ago as 2003, he can be quoted as
4 saying, "Wind turbines don't make good neighbors." ["Wind turbines don't make good
5 neighbors" Some Problems of Wind Power in the Berkshires, Researched and written by
6 Eleanor Tillinghast, Green Berkshires, Inc., May 14, 2004]

7

8 The evidence is growing that Mr. Zimmerman was right. Wind turbines do not make good
9 neighbors. Responsible public officials are beginning to see past the smoke and mirrors of
10 wind developers' claims. Will the groundswell rise fast enough to save us from the mental,
11 emotional, and financial devastation visited on others in the shadow of industrial wind sited
12 too close to homes? Our fate is in your hands. Please defend us.

13

14 As former Gov. Aiken said, "The Northeast Kingdom is the Crown Jewel of Vermont."

15

16 I say, let's keep it that way.

17

18 **Q17. Does this conclude your testimony?**

19

20 A17. Yes it does.