

The Country and the Grassroots: Rural action for local control of energy policy and development

Kurt Reymers¹

This paper presents an ongoing ethnographic study of a coalition of grassroots groups in central New York State that organized in the spring of 2006 to protest the construction of a 110 foot, 400,000 volt, 192-mile long direct current high voltage electrical transmission line from Utica, NY to New Windsor, NY. The study involves how a newly conceived energy corporation, New York Regional Interconnect (NYRI), is capitalizing upon the U.S. 2005 Energy Act which claims that national energy emergencies exist in regions of the United States that are deemed congested by the Department of Energy. Citizen's organizations are jointly protesting the proposed power line on the basis that the assertion that their region is currently in an energy "emergency" is fallacious. The grassroots movement speaks to the sociological questions of democratic practice, citizen's roles in scientific discourse and governmental policy-making, and widely differing claims to knowledge of energy issues. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2008 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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INTRODUCTION

This is the story of a social movement that is emerging within a large

¹ **Kurt Reymers**, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of Social Science at Morrisville State College in upstate New York. He is also co-developer and co-coordinator of the new Science, Technology and Society degree program at Morrisville State College. His chief area of academic research is in cyberculture, social movements and social stratification. Address correspondence to: Kurt Reymers, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Co-coordinator, Science, Technology and Society B.S. Program, Morrisville State College, P.O. Box 901, Morrisville, New York 13408; tel: 315.684.6193 e-mail: reymers@morrisville.edu.