

Buyer Beware!

If you are approached to sign a lease agreement to use your property for an industrial wind turbine (or if you have already signed one), there are a few things you should know:

There is unassailable worldwide evidence that industrial wind turbines do not deliver on the claims made by developers. In Europe and in the U.S., both the courts and regulators have forced the wind-energy industry to significantly “downsize” its descriptions of the potential benefits.

Simply put, the facts are: Wind power is unreliable, inefficient, incredibly expensive, injurious to human health and the environment, and does not reduce greenhouse gasses one iota (in fact, given the need for back-up power generation to compensate for wind’s proven failings, it adds significantly to carbon emissions).

That aside, if you are thinking about signing up for an “easy few bucks”, then at least consider your own interests:

- You may be on the hook for decommissioning the wind turbine on your property. The language in many leases can give the developers an “easy out”. The money realized from hosting a turbine for a minimum 20 year term might not be enough to decommission one turbine. Check out the evidence for yourself: <http://www.wind-watch.org/news/2009/04/09/how-property-owners-can-be-deceived/>
- You are giving up control of your most important asset – lease holders cannot “without limitation” either hunt, plant trees or construct buildings without the wind company’s express permission.
- Putting 35 storey wind turbines on your property can cause the value of your neighbours’ properties to decline as much as 50%, assuming they can even be sold. Is it really worth all the hard feelings?
- In the event the wind power company goes bankrupt, as some already have, you could be responsible for taxes owing as well as any liens on the property for work done on the turbines, related equipment and access roads.
- The wind company has the “perpetual right” to extend the term of your lease on the same conditions.
- Your “profit” could be quickly lost due to hazardous waste abatement costs and the removal of massive concrete foundations to return the land to agricultural use.
- Resident surveys suggest there can be health risks for livestock as well as negative impacts on ecological diversity, such as bat and migratory bird populations.

Lease prospectors have only one primary objective – the commissions they gain from signing you up. Fully informing you of the risks and downsides of such a decision is a much, much lower priority. *So buyer beware!*

For your own financial and personal well being, those even thinking about an industrial wind turbine on their property should obtain independent legal advice. Check out all the facts before you decide this is the right decision for your family, your business and your community.

Educate yourself before it’s too late.
For more information, please go to www.gwag.ca