

WOLFE ISLAND RESIDENTS *for the Environment*

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Commission of the Wolfe Island Wind Project is approaching, and environmental noise and health concerns raised by **WIRE** prior to construction continue to be debated across Ontario. Recent articles about Wolfe Island include:

- *The answer's blowin in the wind, but not all of us want to hear it:* [Globe and Mail](#)
- *On with the wind:* [Canadian Geographic](#), June, 2009
- *Ontario leaps before it looks with proposed wind-turbine rules:* [The Toronto Star](#), June 13, 2009

WIRE encourages everyone to read and discuss these issues and to contribute to on-going studies.

HEALTH, SAFETY & SETBACKS

"Greater setbacks are needed to best protect the health and safety of people in Ontario."

-MPP John Gerretsen, Minister of Environment
June 10, 2009: interview CBC Radio

"Safety legislation is a work in progress."

-MPP John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs
July, 2007: interview Constituency Office

June 9, 2009, the Ontario Government announced that under the **Green Energy Act** it would establish a minimum setback of **550 metres** from residences for *all* wind turbine developments in the province. These proposed setbacks would increase depending on the size of the development (number of turbines) and noise (MOE has a 40 decibel limit). For example, a facility of 8 turbines with a turbine sound power level of 105 dB (A) will need to meet a setback of 1000 metres (m).

Wolfe Island's 86 turbines [sound power level 105 dB (A)]: setback 400m

Before approval of the project, **WIRE** lobbied local and provincial governments to review the issue of setbacks. In 2006 the Frontenac Islands' Township Council established setbacks at **350m**. This was increased to **400m** (600m from village) at the OMB Hearing in July 2007. *Prior to this, the OMB had ruled responsibility to set and change setbacks rested with the province.*

WIRE lobbied MPP John Gerretsen to slow down the approval process until the province's ongoing, official review of the issues of setback, noise and health was complete; to ensure our community would benefit from appropriate protections. Similar requests were made of the Ministers of Health, Environment, Natural Resources and Education. In July 2007, MPP Gerretsen, then Minister of Municipal Affairs, dismissed requests to consider noise and health concerns, citing *"a lack of studies and evidence.."* By June 2009, MPP Gerretsen was supporting the proposed greater setback and monitoring; suggesting that where turbines are found to be causing health problems, they will be moved. (Interview, CBC Radio, June 2009).

Ontario facilitated approval of the Wolfe Island project in May 2008, while at the same time it was preparing changes that would mandate increased setbacks and protection from noise, based on studies of negative health effects at other Ontario facilities.

Wolfe Island now does not meet the Ontario government's own proposed health and safety guidelines for wind industry development.

WIRE's request for a noise by-law, modeled after by-laws in other comparable, rural jurisdictions, was voted down by Township Council. Concerns raised with the KFL&A Health Unit and local school boards had no effect. Despite documented problems at other Ontario wind facilities and calls for monitoring and research, there is no monitoring protocol or government funded health study. On June 25th **WIRE** will be attending a hearing regarding the proposed setbacks to ask the government what they will do if islanders suffer any adverse effects.

WIRE encourages residents to read Dr. Roy McMurty's presentation to the Standing Committee on the **Green Energy Act**, April 22nd, 2009, when he presented his research on the effects of noise at Ontario's existing industrial turbine facilities and called for epidemiological studies and for setbacks consistent with the World Health Organization's recommendations. Dr. McMurty is the former University of Windsor, Ontario, Dean of Medicine and Assistant Deputy Minister of the Population and Public Health Branch of Health Canada.

To assist in the research on this issue and to protect your rights should you or your family suffer any unexpected adverse effects, record the following information in a journal:

- 1. Note your current health issues and concerns;**
- 2. Record any particulars with respect to unanticipated noise or shadow effects in your home or neighbourhood;**
- 3. Note dates, wind direction, time of day and how you feel;**
- 4. Raise all medical issues with your doctor;**
- 5. Notify the wind company, township council, provincial and federal members of parliament and the KFL&A Health Unit**
- 6. Keep written records of all correspondence.**

Wind turbine "noise" is an often misunderstood concept. The "noise" is not necessarily heard at the base of the turbine, but rather can be heard and felt at surprising sites and distances depending on where and how the wind is blowing, the acoustic effect of structures and meteorological conditions.

WIRE is a member of Wind Concerns Ontario, (www.windconcernsontario.org), a coalition of 32 citizens' groups across Ontario advocating for rural residents and environmentally sound energy policy

WIRE'S next news letter will follow: "Bird Habitat and Natural Resources"