



**association to protect
AMHERST ISLAND**

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On Saturday, July 14th, an article in the Kingston Whig Standard was based upon an interview with the Honourable John Gerretsen, the Attorney General for Ontario. The article described his response to the announcement of the "Health Impacts and Exposure to Wind turbine Noise: Research Design and Noise Exposure Assessment" announced by the Federal Minister of Health earlier in the week. We can assume that he was also representing the Ontario Liberal Government with his response.

Mr. Gerretsen said that the federal government probably won't find anything new and that the evidence is pretty conclusive that provided you have a minimum distance setback from homes (550 metres in Ontario) there are no health effects.

The article can be found at:

<http://www.thewhig.com/2012/07/13/enough-studies-on-wind-turbines-mpp>

The response from the Association to Protect Amherst Island is as follows:

First, it should be noted that when it came time for the final appeal to the Minister of the Environment for the Wolfe Island wind project, Mr. John Gerretsen, the then Minister, honourably recused himself because of a conflict of interest. Therefore we should take his opinions with a grain of salt.

There have been no health studies in Canada on the adverse health effects of living in proximity to wind turbines. There have been literature reviews, notably by a team assembled by the Canadian Wind Energy Association, by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health and by consultants for the Ontario Minister of the Environment. These studies acknowledge so-called indirect effects such as annoyance, stress and sleep disturbance but in their conclusions find no evidence of direct adverse health effects. In spite of the large number of residents living in close proximity to turbines reporting chronic health problems, no attempt was made in any of the reviews to interview these people. Many medical practitioners have acknowledged that continuing annoyance, stress and sleep disturbance lead on to more serious health impacts and loss of concentration.

The present Minister of the Environment, Mr. Jim Bradley, continually issues press releases affirming that Ontario has the strictest setbacks in North America or Europe. The reality is that turbines are erected in clusters and the setback from homes is determined by a noise limit of 40 decibels. Germany is just one example with a lower night-time noise limit of 35 decibels. US setbacks are often governed locally and many exceed 550 metres. Australia is gradually heading for a 2 km setback. Acousticians familiar with noise propagation and its impact are recommending 32 decibels.

The federal health study is to be welcomed as it will be a true field study going beyond mere literature review. Furthermore, there needs to be a moratorium on further development until the study is completed.

As its first priority, the Association for the Protection of Amherst Island is committed to stopping an ill-conceived wind energy development on Amherst Island. Located in Lake Ontario, about 25 km west of Kingston, Amherst Island measures approximately 14 km in length by 7 km at its widest. To cover the fixed costs of building on an island, the developer has had to propose building a greater number of turbines than the available area can withstand. If the project goes ahead, the turbines will be situated too close to homes causing noise and shadow flicker nuisance. In addition, the island is a designated Important Bird Area and home a large number of threatened and/or endangered species.

Yours Faithfully

John Harrison, Vice President APAI