

TO AMHERST ISLANDERS WHO HAVE SIGNED WIND-TURBINE OPTIONS OR ARE CONSIDERING SIGNING

Here are **5 facts** you may not have heard about industrial wind-turbines from the developers:

1. They are noisy

- Your neighbours are at risk of being affected by wind-turbine noise and so are you.
- People worldwide have complained about noise from turbines at distances considerably more than a kilometre from their homes (550 metres is the current Ontario minimum setback). They do not get used to the pulsing, thumping or swooshing sounds which can travel through house walls. They are like no other rural sounds and neighbours do not get used to them.
- Standing directly under a turbine is not the test.
- Quiet still nights are the worst, when wind blows at turbine height and it is calm at ground level (a frequent occurrence in summer); then sound can really travel. Neighbours have described "feeling" the sound, even through the pillow. And hearing what sounds like "a jet aircraft continuously revving-up for take-off", or "a train that never arrives". When the blades of nearby turbines synchronize, the sound gets worse.
- Does the option give you a veto on where turbines are put on your property, or do the developers just have to consult with you?

2. They pose health risks to your neighbors and to you

- Over 100 Ontario families living in the vicinity of turbines (the average distance for them is about 860 metres) have reported significant health problems.
- Dr Lynn, Medical Officer of Health for Grey Bruce, estimates that 10 – 15% (that's 40 to 60 islanders) will be affected. Dr Lynn has interviewed actual sufferers. Dr. Arlene King, the Ontario Medical Officer of Health, has not. She is waiting for a definitive medical study that neither she nor the Liberal Government has any intention of starting.
- Rural Ontarians are imagining all this, says the industry. But it hardly explains the infants and young children who complain and whose symptoms go away when they leave the area.
- The French Academy of Medicine has called for 1.5 km set-back; the Japanese Government is now conducting health studies; 2 km set-backs are being proposed in Australia, and some 80 Ontario municipalities have called for a moratorium on further development until we have full *independent* health studies (even the municipalities do not trust the Ontario government any more). And now the provincial Tories are calling for a moratorium until studies are done.
- Something is wrong and we all have need for concern.

3. Harm to your other neighbours

- Virtually all islanders take pride in our diverse and somewhat unique populations of birds, particularly raptors. There is no reason to believe that the wind industry or the government does.
- Bird kill-rates permitted on Wolfe Island are about the same as highest kill-rates found in North America (California, in fact) and are set per turbine, not by the number of turbines.
- The reported kill-rates on Wolfe have been deplorable and denounced; but, of course, they are within permitted limits.

- Professional observers are now suggesting that owls have essentially deserted the wind-turbine zone on Wolfe. Farmers, both in Ontario and elsewhere, have observed the destruction of the raptors' habitat.
- Neither government nor the industry has shown the slightest intention to study these matters.
- With turbines spreading across the raptors' hunting fields on the island, some of you will be concerned with the obvious potential to decimate the raptor population here.
- Once they're up the problems can't be cured. Look at Wolfe Island.

4. Property values are definitely affected

- Your neighbors' properties devalued approximately 30% following the recent announcement of the project. That will be a six-figure loss in most cases.
- As of now, land with an option is virtually un-saleable, unless the option is removed. If you are one of the 15 or so land owners who will receive turbines should the project go ahead, your land will be valued on the cash-flow the turbines produce and not much else. It is reported that some 20 homes have been abandoned in Ontario. Others are reported to have been bought up by wind-turbine developers, with gag orders placed on the previous owners.
- Gag orders are a way of life in this industry. Does the option prevent you talking publicly or to your neighbors should you encounter noise or health problems? Ask yourself why that would be.
- At least one English court has awarded 40% for a neighboring home's loss of value. Some homes in Ontario are proving to be un-saleable.
- Did you know that Real Estate Boards across Ontario now require disclosure to prospective purchasers of knowledge of a proposed project or options?

5. They are not a green solution

- If you have been told that industrial wind-turbines will close our polluting coal plants, it would be false. There are a significant number of days during the year when only light or no wind is experienced across the province and wind-turbine output is poor at best. Full back-up power must be instantly available, or the lights will go out. This instant back-up is provided by coal and gas plants (both CO₂ emitters, although gas is less polluting), which are required to operate constantly. Gas will replace coal; wind will not.

Good neighbours respect their neighbours and do not inflict harm upon them. Islanders know that most of you are good neighbours and will agree with this. The concerns expressed here are both reasoned and deeply felt by so many islanders, although often unexpressed out of respect for friendships and community life. The island is in crisis. Its proposed industrialization will change it forever. Some of you may well agree with this, having seen what has happened on Wolfe Island. It may not be too late to change things.

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