

Multi Municipal Group

*Public Declaration Concerning
the exploitation of rural Ontario
by the Government of Ontario
and the wind power development industry
January 3 2017*

This public declaration, by the Ontario Multi Municipal Group (MMG) provides the Premier of the Government of Ontario and the public at large with our opinions, demands and recommendations concerning the exploitation of rural Ontario by the wind power development industry, and the results for residents, businesses and municipalities.

History of the Multi Municipal Group

The MMG was formed at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference in Windsor in August 2016 to support approximately 115 municipalities (25% of all municipalities in Ontario). This group was formed as a direct result of the initiatives of the municipalities of Wainfleet and North Frontenac which initiated “unwilling host” resolutions. MMG is now speaking out on behalf of *all* municipalities that have passed supporting resolutions as unwilling hosts, resolutions to have input into IWT siting and contracts, and who have passed resolutions opposing elements of the Green Energy Act in its current state.

The results of the renewable energy program in Ontario

The implementation and expansion of renewable energy¹ has developed to a point that it has caused hydro costs to increase; caused a division between rural and urban municipalities; resulted in in-fighting within municipalities; caused the citizens of Ontario to lose faith in our Canadian democratic process; and, has caused us to lose trust and confidence in the Government of Ontario.

The statutory provisions of the Green Energy Act and its regulations effectively restrict the placement of industrial wind turbines to rural Ontario, thereby imposing differential treatment between residents of rural Ontario and residents of urban and suburban Ontario with whom the undersigned municipalities may fairly claim equality. This differentiation imposes wide-spread industrialization on rural municipalities and neutralizes the rights of residents of rural Ontario to advocate for, rely on and claim the benefit of sound land use planning principles, and amounts to a form of discrimination that has the effect of demeaning the human dignity of residents of rural Ontario.

¹ **Note:** The term “renewable energy” in this declaration refers to industrial-scale wind turbines (IWT) and industrial solar farms.

Further, under the terms of the Green Energy Act, the appeal process against installation of IWT projects is heavily weighted in favour of the proponent corporations inasmuch as the only grounds for appeal by any municipality or citizen group is solely on the limited test of the effect on human health or endangered species. Under the current appeal process, citizen groups and municipalities must raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to make their case. To date, while almost every wind power project in Ontario has been appealed, only four appeals have been successful.

Environmental benefit

IWTs are being promoted and constructed before their effectiveness and consequences have been properly assessed. Adequate studies to address human health have not been conducted, scientific studies on impacts on the environment and wildlife are absent or ignored in the face of the government's own legislation, as are the government's own recommendations.

We support addressing climate change and the reduction of Green House Gases (GHG). However, there is *no evidence* that wind turbines reduce GHGs as they require back-up from fossil-fuel derived power sources when the wind doesn't blow. For this reason renewable energy, which has no storage capacity, cannot be used to any significant degree as a substitute for conventional and constant power generation capacities such as nuclear or natural gas. In Ontario we have already significantly reduced greenhouse gases in the last decade. With electricity production in Ontario responsible for only a fifth of the greenhouse gases emitted, and with more than 7,600 large, on-shore wind turbines in Ontario (installed, approved and proposed) — that contribute less than six per cent of the electricity needed — and Ontario is in a surplus power situation for the next 10 years according to the Minister of Energy, there is no rationale to support the promotion of additional renewable energy projects by the government of Ontario.

Economic impact

Wind energy strains the economy. It has contributed to increased electricity prices in Ontario, with a low energy yield on the one hand and high investment costs on the other. This in turn leads to job losses in other areas. As a result of the legislative conditions that have been set, private and public capital is being invested on a large scale — capital which is then unavailable for important environmental protection measures or for use for investment in municipal infrastructure where it is sorely needed. The only way in which investors in wind companies can realize high returns on investment is by means of the excessive payments for electricity produced by wind which has been determined by law, and which are several times their actual market value, and by taxation depreciation and preferential assessment valuations. Because wind energy cannot be stored, when supply exceeds consumption excess energy is sold at below market prices to the U.S., resulting in increased financial burden on Ontario consumers. The resulting high energy costs in turn lead to job losses in other areas because employers — or prospective employers — are relocating to other jurisdictions in Canada or the U.S. because of those escalating costs.

Democracy lost

The implementation of the Green Energy Act has entirely removed municipal governance from the democratic process in that municipalities have absolutely no input on procurement, construction or location of renewable energy projects; it effectively by-passes our official plans and zoning bylaws.

In Canada we have what is called a representative democracy: the democratic process includes three levels of Canadian Government, they being Federal, Provincial and Municipal. Under the Municipal Act, (2006, c. 32, Schedule. A, s. 2.). Municipalities were created by the Province of Ontario to be responsible and accountable governments with respect to matters within their jurisdiction. Each municipality was given powers and duties under this and many other Acts for the purpose of providing good government with respect to those matters. Municipal council is elected by the residents of their communities to provide fair and transparent representation for them. People who are directly exposed to and/or opposed to IWT technology, have been deprived of their constitutionally guaranteed right to have a say in the matter of the shaping of the environment in which they live.

Negative impacts ignored

The negative effects and/or results of wind energy use are as much underestimated as its contribution to the statistics is overestimated. Falling property values reflect the perceived deterioration in quality of life. More and more people describe their lives as unbearable when they are directly exposed to the acoustic and optical effects of IWT farms. There are a growing number of complaints about symptoms such as pulse irregularities and states of anxiety, which are known from the effects of infrasound (sound of frequencies below the normal audible limit). The natural world is also suffering at the hands of this technology, in particular migratory birds and bats. The destruction of the rural environments resulting from the construction of industrial wind projects, transmission lines and the associated roads threatens species at risk and their habitats, including displacement from nesting and breeding grounds. This is despite the Ontario government protecting these through legislation. Some rural communities are seeing their lakes and rivers reach capacity for phosphorous levels, and water bodies depend on vegetation to filter the phosphorous. Industrial renewable energy project construction in a rural environment could allow excess phosphorous into these sensitive waterways causing unwanted environmental issues such as loss of fish habitat and associated plant and wildlife. The government of Ontario is allowing the transformation of cultural landscapes — evolved over centuries — and of entire regions by allowing the construction of Industrial Wind Turbines.

Politicians both internationally and in Ontario have been under pressure to react to climate change and have been promoting a seriously erroneous evaluation of renewable energy. This has allowed the use of wind energy to become established, in the view of public opinion, as some sort of total solution which supposedly makes a decisive contribution towards the economy, a clean environment, and a guaranteed supply of energy for the future, and also contributes towards the aversion of a climate catastrophe. This false picture has raised hopes and has resulted in a general acceptance of the use of renewable energy. However, public opinion about the cost of renewable energy and electricity in general, particularly to residents

in urban centres such as Toronto and Ottawa, has begun to change as a result of the escalation of monthly electricity bills.

The negative effects of the wind energy industry and its technology are suppressed; expert knowledge is ignored or bypassed by the Ontario government’s ministries; and municipal involvement is eliminated from a democratic and collaborative process.

Our rural communities are unprotected against the exploitation of renewable energy. As all efforts to influence those with political responsibilities have been without success, we see no other solution but to make our position clear to the provincial government and to make our concerns public.

Actions requested

As a result of this public declaration:

1. We demand that both LRP I, LRP II, and any projects under appeal to the ERT be cancelled outright immediately.
2. We demand that the Green Energy Act be repealed and any future revisions restore municipal involvement to ensure municipalities are directly involved in future energy strategies and implementation processes.
3. We demand the immediate repeal of sections of statutory provisions in the following Acts/Policies:
 - a. In the Environmental Protection Act: c. E-19, s.142.1
 - b. In the Endangered Species Act, 2007, S.O. 2007: c. 6, s.17
 - c. In the Ontario Energy Board Act, S.O. 1998: c.15, Sched. B, s.96
 - d. In the Planning Act, R.S.O.1990: c.P.13, s. 62.0.2
 - e. In the Electricity Act, 1998, S.O. 1998: c.15, Sched. A, s.41
 - f. In the Assessment Act, R.S.O. 1990: c. A-31, Regulation 282/98, s.42.5
 - g. Renewable Energy On Crown Land (Wind) PL 4.10.06
4. We recommend that the focus of Ontario government energy policies be on current generation capability and conservation.
5. We recommend that we utilize current energy supply assets and focus on energy storage versus building additional renewable energy resources.
6. We recommend that subsidies allocated to renewable energy generation companies be discontinued and instead be allocated to municipalities to allow them to focus on local energy conservation and supply, and their infrastructure needs.

On behalf of the Ontario Multi Municipal Group,

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