

# **An Opinion on Ontario's 'Industrial Wind Power' Initiatives**

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It is difficult to summarize in simple terms what I believe to be the basic facts relating to the Province of Ontario's plan for the implementation of industrial wind farm projects in our province. I have limited knowledge on this issue but I have spent some time researching the massive amounts of related information and attended a couple of community meetings in our area.

I am an ordinary resident living in Grand Bend, Ontario and am not in the shade of any current or proposed wind turbine installation. However I believe that people not only in Ontario but everywhere are being affected by this overall thrust to install thousands of wind turbines as a source of renewable energy. I am concerned that history will look back on this movement as yet another major mistake that could have been avoided.

The following illustrates some basic truths that seem to me to be unchallengeable and I would title them as ***"Industrial Wind Turbine Facts for the Uninformed"***

## **1- Are Ontario's actions and The Green Energy Act well motivated?**

The desire to reduce dependency on fossil fuels and provide clean efficient sources of energy is unquestionably a noble undertaking. However governments must ensure that actions taken actually accomplish their goals without creating other problems that diminish their effectiveness and cause social upheaval.

## **2- Do Industrial Wind Farms add to the overall capacity of our basic system to generate electricity in our province?**

**The answer is no.** Since their output is inconsistent and depends on weather conditions there must always be enough reliable back up generation capacity to supply the maximum requirements of the grid. This can only be accomplished with nuclear, hydro electric, gas fired, coal or whatever will be developed as a source that is available under any and all conditions. Thus **they are only a variable source of electric power that can be utilized only when the wind blows.** You cannot **replace** the standard traditional reliable sources with wind or solar. The provincial government is closing coal generating stations and saying that they are replacing them with wind and solar. If fact, the province will need to build new fossil fuel generation to act as backup for wind and solar generation. An example would be on a hot humid midsummer day with no breeze when the grid is at capacity and everyone is using their air conditioners the wind turbines are useless. The peak annual Ontario demand is typically on one of these hot humid summer days.

Wind farms are decentralized and are generally situated far from the large urban areas that require their output. This geographic dispersion requires Ontario utilities to invest significantly in building new distribution lines to connect these wind farms to the electricity grid.

## **3- Why are subsidies given to wind farm developers to install and run these systems?**

At present there is no way that the cost of installing and operating an industrial wind turbine can compete with any conventional source of producing electricity. If there were no incentives governments would have to undertake this themselves. A powerful global industry has developed to

satisfy the demand for wind turbines based on receiving huge amounts of subsidies from government. I believe that if the subsidies disappeared the industry would collapse. From a purely economic viewpoint they cannot compete in today's energy world.

Ontario is offering contracts guaranteeing profit to wind farm developers for 20 years. Many of these are foreign controlled companies who mask their operations by creating Canadian offices. They are attracted to the subsidy guarantees which are long term bonanzas for them. It also helps to explain why their industry has created such powerful lobby groups

#### **4- Are there real health related issues due to proximity of industrial wind turbines?**

There seems to be many more than just a few complaints of health problems with residents close to wind turbine installations. Also some very learned medical experts have investigated and questioned the government standards as well as requesting proper studies on this issue.

I am disappointed in the McGuinty government's response to their concerns whereby they either dismiss or try to discredit any opposing points of view and reply with only opinionated rhetoric or professional experts who have a vested interest in supporting the government position.

I find it distasteful to politicize the plight of people whose health and way of life has been adversely affected by their actions.

#### **5- Why are some municipal councils objecting to the province's Green Energy Act?**

The Green Energy Act apparently is all powerful and removes the right of municipalities and lower tier governments to have any control over the installation of industrial wind turbines in their jurisdictions or protect the rights of their constituents who challenge and have grievances.

This appears to me to be dictatorial and a recipe for poor intergovernmental relationships.

#### **6- How big is the opposition in Ontario to the McGuinty government's policies and actions on this issue?**

It is stated that there are at present 57 grass roots citizen groups in Ontario who are actively challenging the government on industrial wind farms. Some of these groups are extremely well organized and represent thousands of citizens whose only interests are to protect their way of life, their health and promote an energy policy that is realistic and cost effective. I imagine most of them are rural based since that is where the most adverse results are felt.

*However I acknowledge that there are some farm owners who are happy to collect approximately \$10,000.00 per year for each wind turbine on their land.*

It is also stated that there are 76 municipal councils who have taken some form of action pertaining to The Green Energy Act and the installations of wind farms in their area.

The website for 'Wind Concerns Ontario' is but one example of massive amounts of information from everywhere covering problems and concerns on this issue. It is almost impossible to digest all of it but it does indicate that Ontario residents are not the only ones in this world who are skeptical of being so strongly committed to wind power being the answer to energy problems.

## **7- Should people living in the big cities be concerned about these wind farms in rural Ontario?**

If the installations are not in your back yard it is easy to be complacent and buy into the sales pitch from Ontario's marketing and advertising campaigns feeling that we are being environmentally responsible. However, they should take the time to look deeper into the issue and be sure that the objectives are going to be met in a satisfactory manner.

They will be paying the lion's share of the costs which always come back to the electricity ratepayer. I suggest that when the electric bills keep rising and the indirect taxes and costs find their way into their pocket book they have to be asking *'Did we get any real worthwhile value for our dollars on this issue?'*

## **8- Should we be concerned that the rural landscape will be altered?**

This comes down to your point of view but there is no doubt that our pastoral rural views will be altered indefinitely. The new huge wind turbines packed into our agricultural counties will be impossible to ignore and will over shadow mother nature to say the least.

It is sad to see the controversy and passionate opposing views splitting friendships and rural communities. This is a side effect that cannot be easily measured but is not healthy for our province.

### **Opinion:**

This only covers a few basic questions on industrial wind farms in our area and volumes have been written by untold numbers of people, but it indicates that this issue is huge and has dramatic long term effects on our society.

I personally feel that the McGuinty government's dictatorial push for industrial wind farms may be misguided. Wind turbine technology is old and has limited room for improvement so I believe that the large amounts of taxpayer dollars that are being committed to this venture would have better long term benefit if the funds were directed to research and development of new technology in alternative fuel sources that are reliable and will eventually be cost effective.

I hope that politics can be softened and reason will prevail as Ontario proceeds with their energy policies. I am sure that this issue will be a major player in the provincial election in the fall of 2011.

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May 2011