WCO | WIND CONCERNS ONTARIO

January 9, 2012

Members of Council, City of Hamilton

Re: motion to revise moratorium on industrial wind turbine projects for Hamilton

Dear members of Council:

We received word from one of our member groups, West Lincoln Glanbrook Wind Action Group, that there may be a motion before Council this week to alter the City of Hamilton’s stance on industrial wind power generation projects, specifically to limit the resolution on a moratorium.

This would be a mistake.

Hamilton is among the more than 70 municipalities in Ontario to pass a motion on industrial wind projects—your citizens can be proud that you stood up to protect the health and economic future of your citizens. Maintaining the moratorium is the right thing to do. Here’s why:

Promises of jobs and prosperity from wind power are false

In his 2011 report (http://www.auditor.on.ca/en/reports_en/en11/2011ar_en.pdf ) the Auditor-General of Ontario noted that forecasts of job creation related to renewable energy and specifically wind power were overstated, that 75% of the jobs would be short-term construction work, and further that jobs will actually be LOST as a result of higher energy costs in Ontario. (page 117)

Negative health effects from turbine noise are real

The Environmental Review Tribunal held in Chatham-Kent in 2011 found that “This case has successfully shown that the debate should not be simplified to one about whether wind turbines can cause harm to humans. The evidence presented to the Tribunal demonstrates that they can, if facilities are placed too close to residents.” Turbines are
huge machines that do produce noise and vibration—they don’t belong anywhere near the people of Hamilton. As a Registered Nurse myself, I have met a number of people suffering the effects of this unique environmental noise; their symptoms are real.

**Ontario’s setbacks are not the best in North America**

Ontario says its 550-meter setback between homes and industrial wind power generators is the most stringent in North America. This is false: 36 jurisdictions to date have much farther setbacks, including Nova Scotia at 1,000 meters.

**We need wind power to supply electricity**

Wind power is expensive and unreliable—it will never replace any type of power generation. In fact, wind power NEEDS fossil-fuel backup because it is intermittent and unreliable: that means, more natural gas plants.

**Wind power generation and manufacture is the way of the future**

No, it’s not: along with job losses due to higher energy costs, the technology behind wind power generation is not made-in-Ontario. Many companies involved in wind power generation are foreign, having exhausted the subsidy structure in other countries. Wind power is about the subsidy offered through the Ontario Feed-In Tariff program—on its own, it is NOT sustainable.

**Renewable energy projects improve property values**

Again, not true: studies (Luxemburger, Brampton; McCann, Chicago; Appraisal One Group, Wisconsin) are showing that property values for neighbours of wind projects decline, as much as 40 percent...or more. With declining property values, the tax burden will have to be picked up by other taxpayers in a municipality—not something you want to sell to your urban taxpayers. And, what will be the effect on the local economy of the decline in value of homes for young families building a future and people counting on that value for their retirement?

We close with another statement from the Auditor-General: “...no comprehensive business case evaluation was done to objectively evaluate the impacts of the billion-dollar commitment .”

So, limited jobs and in fact job losses, negative health effects, expensive unreliable power supply that requires MORE fossil-fuel power generation as back up, and a strain on all taxpayers—we believe Hamilton made the right choice in calling for a moratorium against industrial-scale wind power projects, and should stand by that choice.

Sincerely,

09/01/2012
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