



## The province sold out on wind energy plan

### Letters to the Editor

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### Property and tax values adversely affected

To the Editor;

I had to laugh when I noticed the large display ad by the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CANWEA) on the back page of our local newspaper last week. In it, Mayor Lynn Acre describes the utopian benefits of the 26 km-long Erie Shores Wind Farm and encourages us all to come down and have a look for ourselves.

By coincidence, I happened to be performing a test flight on a new aircraft with another pilot over the Erie Shores Wind Farm just the day before our paper arrived. After the morning's flying, we repaired to a packed local restaurant for lunch wearing our flying kit. It only took a minute for one of the locals to ask if we were flying and if we had seen the wind farm. The ensuing conversations were lively and punctuated with anger and peppered with expletives. They were not so much conversations, as they were forceful warnings about the perils of wind generation.

What we heard, in no uncertain terms, from farmers and rural folk, some who had as many as five turbines on their land was this;

- 1) Wind turbine companies seem to seek maximum control of leased land. And they like to make deals and pit neighbours against each other.
- 2) Wind farms are very difficult to farm, leaving large areas that are impossible for big equipment to work or spray. All those corners and angles around the towers, transformers and roads turn into weed patches that infiltrate planted crops. "I've farmed clean all my life, but in the last three years, fighting the weeds around these things (windmills) has become a nightmare."
- 3) The mayor mentioned increased tax revenue and we certainly heard about that. Several people spoke angrily about the fact that the municipality, which has lost a large amount of its industrial tax base, was now recouping it from anyone who had a wind tower or leased infrastructure on their land. No one had told them before they signed up for these towers that their land would be reassessed at commercial/industrial tax rates, not the agricultural rate to which they were accustomed. Several indicated that, "It just isn't worth it."
- 4) The saddest and most bitter pill, though, came from older farmers and landowners who wanted to sell and retire. They said there were only two kinds of buyers for property with

towers, wind companies at bargain prices or other wind companies at even less money that want to put up more towers. Nobody wants to live beside the towers.

5) One term repeatedly used by people living with wind towers was disaster, referring to the loss and damage to their lives and farms, their community and the environment.

We heard plenty more in that restaurant but not a word of support for wind power, the wind companies or the politicians who are enabling this disaster. It left the distinct impression that the grassroots are just now starting to lash back against being sold out by our provincial government and its hair-brained, make-it-up-as-you-go energy policies.

It's good to see CANWEA supporting the newspapers through paid advertising. It's also good that we have all be invited by the Mayor to head on down to Erie Shores and see it for ourselves. While you're there, don't forget to stop and talk to the folks who live with "big wind" so that you can get the real story.

Sincerely

D. Paul Briggs

**Creemore**