

# Ontario's Power Trip: Wind in your Sails



Fabrice Dimier/Bloomberg

EDF Energies Nouvelles SA wind turbines operate in Lethuin, France

[Financial Post Staff](#) July 28, 2010 – 2:55 pm

**By Parker Gallant**

The Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) on July 15, 2010 released a report conducted for them by Ipsos-Reid in June. It was a relatively simple survey with only 6 questions, presumably developed in conjunction with CanWEA. In a press release issued by CanWEA, the President, Robert Hornung, was positively elated and had this to say;

“This poll clearly indicates that wind energy enjoys broad support across the province, regardless of where residents live,” said CanWEA president, Robert Hornung. “Those polled clearly believe that wind energy not only brings environmental benefits but it can also play a vital role in spurring local and regional economic development. There is much

to be optimistic about wind's future in the province, and the poll reflects the fact that Ontario citizens believe in the promise of this growing industry.”

Take a close look at the survey questions, however, and where the polling took place. It turns out Hornung is overplaying the results. While the poll indicates that almost 90% support (Q 1) the development of wind energy in the province only 44% (Q 3) are actually aware of wind developments. Based on the order of those two questions asked of the 1,391 survey respondents I would bet anyone in the business of conducting surveys would say the results are skewed and therefore biased in favour of CanWEA.

Two follow-up questions ask those informed (44%) and uninformed (56%) respondents to pick the “benefits” and “drawbacks” of wind farms and choose from a list of 30 benefits and 26 drawbacks. Even the nouns chosen for these question are skewed. The first benefit is listed as “cheap/affordable/cost savings”. No surprise that 31% picked that one. If you are uninformed shouldn't Ipsos-Reid simply have skipped over these two questions otherwise the respondent is simply guessing. On the “drawbacks” list “unreliable” is listed 7th and the 1st is “noisy”. How would the uninformed know?

The lead up to the results of the survey by Ipsos-Reid outlines out the geographic location of the respondents and, lo and behold, 384 are from the Greater Toronto Area, where there is one wind demonstration wind turbine, a giant money-losing contraption located on the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition. Do GTA residents know about wind turbines, and do they care? With a setback requirement of 550 metres they will never be affected. Why didn't Ipsos-Reid identify urban vs rural respondents? One suspects the results would have been not quite so favourable and Mr. Hornung would not have liked them.

The take away from this skewed survey is that CanWEA can wave it in front of Premier Dalton McGuinty and his cabinet ministers and declare mass support for wind. The citizens of Ontario love the province's Green Energy Act and they love big, unreliable, invasive wind farms.

Read more: <http://opinion.financialpost.com/2010/07/28/ontario-power-trip-wind-in-your-sails/#ixzz0wnoVXw8x>