

The Great Lakes are the most important environmental feature in North America. Any major construction in them has the potential to cause great damage. The numbers of wind turbines envisioned and their geographical spread make their introduction to the Great Lakes a high-risk endeavor. For these risks to be taken there needs to be great rewards, and those rewards ought to be documented and provable, as the risks are real enough. In the case of wind turbines the rewards are at best unknowable and most likely non-existent. I oppose wind turbines in general because I have yet to see any evidence of their benefit. I especially oppose them in the Great Lakes - to risk one of Ontario's most valuable assets for something that has questionable value strikes me as folly.

Apparently Ontario has taken the position that the 5km setback will mitigate most of these risks, and no doubt the Province hopes that with this setback it will be seen as diligent. But the proposed distance is no guarantee the mitigation will be achieved, and Ontario's environmental record on wind turbines thus far is not impressive, i.e. Wolfe Island. Regardless of what setback is used, further steps must be taken to insure any problems are quickly discovered, and Ontario must have the means to mitigate any problems as they arise. The five areas you mention in the Discussion Paper are all well and good, but in none of them did I see any evidence that Ontario is truly serious about protecting either humans or wildlife around the Lakes. To be truly serious the following additional actions will need to be taken.

1.1 - Drinking Water. To verify that the drinking water is safe, Ontario must continuously test it during any construction in the area. If any pollution is found, resources and procedures for providing an alternative supply must be in place.

1.2 - Noise. Establish a moratorium on further wind turbine projects until the means to verify compliance exists. With its 40 dBA limit, Ontario continues to allow too much wind turbine noise to enter people's homes and properties, while preventing any recourse for those so affected. Continuing to allow projects to be built with no method of verifying noise levels is reckless. People who are affected, especially by sleep disturbances, should be bought out.

1.3 - Near Shore Activities. Ontario must develop standards for keeping the boating public safe around offshore wind turbines. This would include chart updates, day and night-time markings, and audible warnings in fog. In spite of what measures are taken, large parts of the Lakes will effectively become off-limits for many boaters. Additionally, wind turbines will make airplane flights more dangerous, especially in fog. The list of issues is very large, and Ontario's two short paragraphs provide me no confidence that something won't be missed, for example: liability issues, how is rescue to be done, spill detection and control.

1.4 - Ecological Considerations. Local environmental studies are not sufficient. Given the number of wind turbines planned in many areas, cumulative studies must be done. Given the substantial risks, full Environmental Assessments must be done. In many cases mitigation will not be possible once the turbines are in place, so sponsors of deficient studies must be held accountable.

1.5 - Shipping Lanes. It appears that Ontario has settled on a 0.6NM (~1100m) shipping lane. In good weather this may be adequate; in foul weather it may not be. All the ramifications in the event of a collision must be thought out ahead of time, such as: rescue, liability and clean up.

Although no discussion was solicited for the topics in section 2, I feel obligated to mention the use of the word "may" in the last sentence of section 2.5, where financial assurance for decommissioning is mentioned. Anything less than requiring an adequate bond or escrow will pretty much guarantee that at least some of these turbines will serve as long-term monuments to Ontario's disregard of its most vulnerable and valuable environmental asset. That isn't a legacy I'd like to leave; I'd like to think it isn't one the current Ontario government would like to leave either.

Ontario is so eager to install wind turbines that really taking care of the environment seems a secondary consideration. Why is the Province in such a hurry to issue permits for hundreds of turbines before even one has been proved out? This is simply reckless, and no amount of words about how much Ontario cares for the Great Lakes will lessen the very real risks being taken. Wind turbines are not something that can be undone. Please proceed with more care than what has been demonstrated to date.