

8850, Second Concession Road
Stella, ON K0H2S0
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Editor, Whig Standard,

Dear Sir,

Yesterday evening I was in Ottawa to attend the first of the provincial government information sessions on the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) draft regulations to accompany the Green Energy Act. The intent of these regulations is to provide province-wide procedures for renewable energy developers. MOE is involved because it has responsibility for the Environmental Protection Act and MNR because it is responsible for crown land and off-shore sites for wind energy. The idea is that these procedures will allow fast-tracking of projects that developers claim were being held up by municipal control of renewable energy development under the now-obsolete Provincial Policy Statement. The developers have had direct access to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, the Minister of the Environment and their senior officials during the passage of the Green Energy Act and the development of the draft regulations. Therefore, these information sessions are for the general public; this was clear from the make-up of the audience among which the developers were notable by their absence (with one or two exceptions). The seriousness with which the ministries treated the session was demonstrated by the junior level of the officials sent along and their lack of knowledge of the technical aspects of the regulations.

The meeting started harmoniously enough with a presentation by the MOE official on the regulations and the process for reviewing them. However, as the question and answer period got underway, the focus was on setbacks of wind turbines from homes and the audience was getting more and more frustrated by the shallow answers and absence of justification for the setback regulations. I have never seen an audience at a political meeting so angry. Mainly there were people who do, will or perhaps will live surrounded by turbines (in a local context this would correspond to Wolfe Island, Prince Edward County and Amherst Island) and who therefore have considerable insight into the annoyance and health impacts associated with having these industrial behemoth turbines within 1.5 km of homes. In the audience was Ms. Carmen Krogh, a health professional who, together with Dr. Robert McMurtry and others, has been responsible for a health survey of Ontarians suffering from sleep deprivation and a number of ailments associated with turbine noise and poorly engineered transmission lines from the turbines. She wanted to know where the studies are showing that the setback distances are commensurate with the health and well-being of people living near turbines; also where was the Ministry of Health and why has it failed to take any part in the regulatory process. Others wanted to know who to sue or who will compensate for the 30% drop in value of their homes; just what does MOE mean by taking mitigating measures when it has failed to do so for presently operating wind developments; why was the meeting held in the middle of Ottawa when the regulations are of no interest to urban dwellers; why is the industry allowed to continue development when there has been no government health study; why is Ontario setting more lax regulations than Germany when there is so much more experience there and elsewhere in Europe; why is the setback from roads and lot-lines 120 metres when there are many examples of ice-throw and blade throw far beyond that.

For MOE, the lead ministry in the evening's information and fact-gathering session, and, by extension, the Minister of the Environment, the evening was a public relations disaster. MOE needs to go back to the drawing board and rethink the setback distances from homes, roads and lot-lines. While at it, the Liberal Government needs to involve local municipalities much more in

the planning process; at present, their role is limited to being consulted and we know what that means.

Yours Sincerely,
John Harrison