

May 2012
Issue #122

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COVER STORY

Wind turbines need to be stopped says opponent

by Chris Cooke

Wind turbines are bad for health and bad for the economy. And the Middlesex – Lambton Wind Action Group is calling on municipal and provincial politicians to stop the proliferation of wind projects in Lambton County.

Group spokesman Mike Mahood of Thedford told the Rotary Club of Sarnia Bluewaterland that if left unchallenged Suncor Energy will build 250 turbines 600 feet high along Lake Huron in Lambton Shores. And he says another 150 will dot the County from Forest through to Watford and into Plympton Wyoming.

Four of the giant turbines known as the Zephyr Wind Plant are under construction at Watford and Mahood says that's just the beginning.

He predicts "nothing good will come from this," and insists the government of Dalton McGuinty "needs to be stopped."

Mahood says McGuinty continues to ignore world – wide research that points to negative human and animal health impacts. Low frequency noise, shadow flicker and stray voltage are causing sleep disturbances, dizziness and nausea in humans along with low milk and egg production in farm animals he says.

Turbine blades are killing birds, bats and insects as the



proliferation of wind turbines continues unabated.

Mahood says he purchased his farm, a pristine piece of property three years ago and he fears turbines that will devalue his property and affect his health will soon surround it. While his wind action group continues to take its message to the public and protest, the Ontario Environmental Review Tribunal has indicated the issue isn't whether turbines can cause harm to humans but the degree of that harm.

And so far, Mahood says the Tribunal has sided with turbine developers like Suncor. "Proponents have the ear of the Ministries of Environment and Natural Resources," says Mahood to the detriment of the general public and farm communities.

"Dairy farmers in Lambton are very much aware of

fringe current and stray voltage creeping into their barns and animals."

Southwestern Ontario is a migration corridor for birds yet there isn't any shoreline setbacks to safeguard what Mahood described as "a world class flyway." And the 550-metre setback stipulated in the Ontario Green Energy Act as a safe distance for people to be from turbines is "grossly inadequate."

Mahood says, "as turbines gets larger, the impact gets greater and the setback becomes more inadequate."

He described wind energy as "an industry in its infancy and it is like the wild west when it comes to setting down policies that will protect people and animals."

McGuinty has touted green energy as means of creating 50,000 jobs but Mahood says

the Auditor General has indicated 30,000 of those jobs are temporary linked to construction and the premier's projection fails to take into consideration job losses in other sectors of the economy.

Mahood notes Germany, Spain and Denmark have slowed their drive toward renewable energy citing the loss of traditional jobs and heavy subsidization required for green energy jobs. Denmark found "each green job cost \$90,000 to \$140,000 per year in public sector subsidies to create."

Mahood says studies in the United Kingdom indicate four jobs are lost elsewhere in the economy for each job in the renewable energy sector primarily due to higher electricity pricing. And he suggests there are similar numbers in Ontario. "You don't have to look far to see what is happening to manufacturing jobs here."

Mahood concluded the overwhelming impact of wind turbines is negative on tourism, jobs, economic development, the environment and health and the industry is "virtually unregulated."

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