

MULTI-MUNICIPAL WIND TURBINE WORKING GROUP

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February 4, 2022

Greetings Members of Council,

As Municipal Leaders, we are mandated by the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as amended to provide measures necessary for the health, safety and well-being of citizens within our jurisdiction. The Multi-Municipal Wind Turbine Working Group (MMWTWG) collectively addresses concerns that are raised in relation to the various wind turbine projects across the province.

The list of concerns and implications is continually growing and many citizens are completely unaware of the effects, both short and long term that wind turbines pose. To provide some context to the complex matters that the MMWTWG continues to work to resolve, some principal issues are provided.

1. Public Safety

- Setbacks for tower collapse are insufficient. The current blade length plus 10 metres requirement is not a strong enough protective measure. Ontario has seen collapses of GE Turbine at Raleigh and Vestas Turbine at Bow Lake. Public database details at least 95 collapses worldwide, including Enercon, Siemens, Nordex, and others. Bow Lake turbines were also permitted to restart by regulator without any public release of information of recent failure.
- Setbacks for blade failures are insufficient. The current blade length plus 10 metres requirement is not a strong enough protective measure. Ontario has seen debris at 560 metres with 51-metre setback, with failures from GE, Vestas, Suzlon/Repower. Regulator did inadequate safety review of post commissioning installation of "power cone" at Skyway 8 and is permitting turbine restart without public investigation into impact of failure on tower integrity.
- Setbacks for ice throw are also insufficient, as the blade length plus 10 metre setback is less than the ice throw distance witnessed in Ontario.
- Fire hazard – Ontario has witnessed turbine fire and flaming debris on the ground at 200 metres, while setback was 50 metres. Ministry review failed to recommend industry standard protective barriers for fire suppression in spite of examples of fires in similar turbines.
- Landholder leases give no setback protection for vulnerable citizens (children and other family members of lease holder, employees, couriers, etc.)

2. Health Impacts

- Sleep deprivation – most common identified irritant.
- Stress – identified link from irritants to cardio vascular events.
- Unexplained cardiac events, diabetic events
- Cyclical noise (major irritant) not assessed by Ontario Compliance Protocol.
- Tonality (irritant at some projects) not adequately assessed by standards.
- Dominant, irritating, turbine noise signature dwarfs rural noise environment.
- Loss of enjoyment of property, contrary to Environmental Protection Act.

3. Municipal Finances

- Tax base – Assessment of multi-million-dollar turbines capped at under \$50k per MW, adversely impacts tax base. Similar to unpermitted “bonusing” by permitting low taxation. Impacts ability to build on adjoining properties.
- Community impact grants – associated “gag-clauses” deny transparency.
- Impact on roadways – large component delivery cause damages to roads.
- Upcoming impact on landfill – Component End of Life – blades not recyclable.
- Decommissioning costs – no guarantee of cost coverage at many sites.

4. Community Cohesiveness

- Rural neighbourhood – acrimony prevents neighbours working together, those profiting often not those who suffer impacts

5. Energy Supply Stability

- Mismatch to consumer demand, turbine output falls as consumer load increases in morning, but rises as consumer load falls in the evening
- Seasonal mismatch a big concern as turbine output poorest when consumer demand is highest in summer air conditioning season, and in winter heating season, yet turbine output is highest when consumer demand is lowest in spring and fall
- Requires construction of backup generation, that must price output highly as only operated intermittently.

6. Consumer Energy Cost

- First access to grid costs – force less costly generation off the grid. Ontario energy transitioned from least costly to most expensive in North America.
- Costs of required storage options will increase costs even further.
- Lowered electrical system reliability due to uncontrollable factors (weather).

7. Lack of response from responsible Ministry to complaints and professional input

- Inconsistent Ministry response to complaints from impacted citizens
- Lack of Ministry response to professional input – no disposition of items, just neglect.

8. Lack of Respect of Impacted Citizens

- Ministry failed to investigate the majority of complaints, took no action to correct, contrary to Renewable Energy Approvals regulations.

This Working Group shares municipal advice on by-laws, road use agreements, fire suppression requirements and other considerations that need to be considered before dealing with wind developers. We are striving to support municipalities and citizens and to become aware of issues and possible remedies regarding industrial wind turbines before it is too late to take proactive actions.

Our Working Group is currently comprised of municipalities from the Counties of Bruce, Grey, Huron and Niagara Region, but the issue of wind turbines is wider. By working together, can we share knowledge and provide a collective municipal response to protect our citizens. As a Working Group, it has given us the opportunity to invite participation at our meetings by Provincial MPPs and Ministry of the Environment Officials, and to hear technical and municipal planning presentations related to the subject.

The MMWTWG annual fee is set at the beginning of each year. This fee is used to cover the cost of a Recording Secretary, miscellaneous costs for preparation and circulation of materials as well as any fees related to space rentals for meetings. A small surplus is maintained for donation to a defence fund in case any municipal bylaw might be challenged by a developer. The yearly fee is paid to the "Municipality of Arran-Elderslie"; and sent directly to the Municipal Office c/o Clerk.

During 2021, the annual fees were waived as we navigated our way through the pandemic. We have resumed meeting in a "virtual" platform and anticipate this new format will continue in the future. This allows for participation across the province providing the convenience to join from wherever you are. The Working Group meets on the second Thursday of each month. Agendas and other materials are circulated to the Members by email as well as to the Clerk's of the Member Municipality's. Each member Municipality may appoint by resolution of Council, two (2) Working Group Members, one (1) Alternate Member and one (1) Citizen to provide additional expertise or information to the discussion. A copy of the Working Group Terms of Reference and Procedural Bylaw can be provided upon request.

Our annual fees are not due until June 1, 2022. At this time, we would like to extend this invitation to Members of your Council to participate in the Multi-Municipal Wind Turbine Working Group meetings to better understand the work that we do and the matters we stand for.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 7pm via Zoom.

Please contact our Recording Secretary to obtain a copy of the agenda as well as the Zoom link for the meeting.

We look forward to your participation and support of this critical matter. Size in numbers provides a louder voice to be heard.

Warm Regards,
On behalf of the Chair, Tom Allwood

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Reid".

Julie Reid, Recording Secretary
Deputy Clerk
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