

7 Wind Turbine Myths

Who is this guide for?

Everyone in Ontario will be affected by the **outlandish subsidies** offered to wind energy developers for **the next twenty years** through extra charges on their hydro bills.

This is not your run-of-the-mill Province of Ontario well-hidden billion-dollar boondoggle. **This time it's different.** The **billions of wasted dollars** will be added directly to your power bills.

What does this guide do?

This guide dispels many of the myths that wind energy promoters use to promote their views.

Synopsis:

- The Ontario government is forcing its citizens to live with wind power projects that make no economic sense, while at the same time saddling them with potential health, environmental, and financial costs.
- Wind turbines have **NO REDEEMING QUALITIES**, yet the Ontario government has created a “land rush” mentality by paying developers outrageous incentives to build thousands more wind turbines all over rural Ontario.
- Everyone in Ontario will be forced to pay their share of the **outlandish subsidies** offered to these developers for **the next twenty years** through extra charges on their hydro bills.
- Municipalities and individuals have **NO CONTROL** over where wind developments are sited. When it comes to locating wind and solar power installations, control over land-use was taken away from municipalities by the Ontario Government when it passed the **Green Energy Act**.

“The only people who want to push wind energy for its own sake are those who expect to profit from it.”

(Ross McKittrick, Professor of Economics, University of Guelph.)

Myth #1 – Wind turbines are “green” and good for the environment

Reality:

- Many wind turbine projects are constructed in rural or previously undisturbed wildlife areas.
- Wind turbine towers can be more than 300 feet high (about 30 stories). The height of a tower and blade (when vertical) can be 450 feet (45 stories). This dwarfs all natural features.
- During construction, trees are cut down, wetlands are filled in, embankments are carved into natural hillsides, hill tops blasted, and roads capable of handling massive pieces of heavy machinery are built to every wind turbine location.
- Concrete pads the size of swimming pools are poured to anchor every tower. These will never be removed, even at the end of the useful life of the wind turbine.
- The turbines contain magnets which are made with a light weight rare earth metal called neodymium. Neodymium is mined in China under appalling conditions, with little or no concern for the health and safety of the workers or the environment.
- Wind turbines shred birds and kill bats. The most susceptible birds are hawks, eagles, and other large species. Populations of these birds are more at risk due to lower reproductive rates.
- Gilead Power Corp. (a wind developer in Prince Edward County), has submitted an application to the Ministry of Natural Resources that seeks to “kill, harm and harass” the nesting grounds of the Blanding’s Turtle and the Whip-poor-will bird, two species which inhabit Ostrander Point.
- Wolfe Island near Kingston is home to 86 wind turbines. Bird kills are so numerous that two full time employees drive around the island in pickup trucks collecting carcasses.

Myth #2 – Wind turbines reduce CO2 (greenhouse gas) emissions

Reality

- Wind speeds are quite variable and often the wind does not blow at all when we need power. Consequently, electricity generated by wind turbines fluctuates, is unreliable, unpredictable and it has to be backed up by more reliable sources (typically natural gas power plants) which must idle on standby so they can be quickly powered up and down to compensate for the variable winds. When back-up power plants do not operate at a steady speed, they run less efficiently and generate more CO2. This offsets much of the expected savings in CO2 emissions from wind power.
- The construction phase of a wind project is CO2-intensive due to the heavy machinery used for road building, transporting large components over long distances, and making and transporting large amounts of concrete.
- Wind power is one of least effective and most expensive ways to attempt to reduce CO2.

Myth #3 – Wind projects help create “green jobs” and represent good economics

Reality

- Wind energy subsidies destroy jobs through higher energy prices and higher taxes.
- A study done in Spain, where wind turbines are well-established, has shown that for every subsidized green job created, 2.2 jobs are lost from the real economy.
- Every “green job” in Ontario is estimated to cost \$179,000 annually.
- Consumers are being forced to pay about **four times** the market rate for electricity from wind and **fifteen to twenty times** the market rate for electricity from solar. These additional costs are tacked onto our power bills. It is expected that by 2015, every hydro bill in Ontario will include an extra \$315 to pay for wind power.
- For every unit of wind power capacity, an equal amount of back-up generation is required (to produce power when the wind isn’t blowing sufficiently). Having to build two sources for each unit of wind power duplicates costs and adds to the overall cost of wind, *in addition to* the subsidies mentioned above.
- Significant costs are also needlessly incurred to build transmission lines to tie wind projects into the power grid.
- Wind power is not like riding your bike to work and leaving your car in the driveway. It’s like riding your bike to work and having someone follow in your car. When you get tired of pedaling (70% of the time in this analogy) you ride in the car the rest of the way.

Myth #4 – Ontario needs more power and we are running out of oil, so we need to develop renewable sources of power like wind and solar.

Reality

- The electricity which powers your home or business in Ontario comes from the following sources (average for 2010) nuclear (55%), hydro (20%), natural gas (14%), coal (8%), wind (2%), other (1%). With nuclear and hydro, Ontario’s power is already 75% “low carbon;” one of the “cleanest” jurisdictions in the world.
- There are no oil powered generation facilities in Ontario.
- Natural gas is the cheapest source of new supplies of energy. It is also quite plentiful.
- Ontario routinely has to sell surplus power to other jurisdictions at a discount, sometimes paying others to take it. Consumers are being forced to buy wind and solar power from producers at **four to twenty times the market rate** and then sell it to others at a discount or pay them to take it off our hands!

Myth #5 – Wind power will help us eliminate “dirty coal” plants, the pollution from which kills hundreds, if not thousands of Ontarians every year.

Reality (excerpt from *The National Post*, Feb 5, 2004; “Smog Deaths:0”; Ross McKittrick)

- In an article entitled “Smog Deaths: 0,” Ross McKittrick, Professor of Economics, University of Guelph reviewed a study on deaths from air pollution. Here are some excerpts;
 - Economist Gary Koop and environmental scientist Lise Tole, from the University of Leicester in the U.K. published a peer-reviewed paper in the respected Journal of Environmental Economics and Management that was based on air pollution data for Toronto.
 - The title of their paper is the very model of British understatement: "Measuring the Health Effects of Air Pollution: To What Extent Can We Really Say that People are Dying from Bad Air?"
 - ***“If I'd found the results they got, I'd have chosen a title like: The Death Rate from Air Pollution in Toronto is a Big Fat Zero. That, in a nutshell, is what they found.”***
- In other presentations, McKittrick has said that claims of thousands of deaths caused air by pollution annually in Toronto are based on the output from faulty computer models, not actual observations.
- He explains that when real (higher than they are today) pollution levels from the 1970's were input into one of these computer models to test its accuracy, it predicted more deaths from air pollution than actually occurred in the entire population from all causes during the time period considered.
- Many groups continue to make completely unfounded claims that thousands of deaths are caused by air pollution, in spite of the fact that the computer models (which the claims are based on) are faulty and they do not reflect the evidence, as shown by the Koop and Tole study mentioned above.
- The waste of billion dollars of our money is being supported by these claims.

Myth #6 – Farmer “X” will be able to keep his subsistence farming operation in the family now that he has lease income from the wind project.

Reality

- It's good to be Farmer “X,” the landowner who leases his land to the wind developer.
- It's not so good to be his many neighbours, who will be saddled with potential health issues, noise and visual pollution, declining property values (or land they can't sell), environmental degradation, land use restrictions on property that is adjacent to the wind towers, and to add insult to injury... higher power bills... which will help the wind company pay Farmer “X.”

Myth #7 – “The scientific evidence does not demonstrate any direct causal link between wind turbine noise and adverse health effects.”

(Dr. Arlene King, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health)

Reality (excerpt from Ontario Farmer.com– June 30, 2011)

- Ontario lags far behind Australia on the matter of the health effects of living near wind turbines. A Senate Committee for the Australian government has recently tabled recommendations for moving forward with studies into health concerns about wind turbines.
- One submission to the Australian Senate enquiry came from Dr. Geoff Leventhall, a coauthor of the American/Canadian wind industry sponsored 2009 report. Dr. Leventhall has previously said he accepts reported symptoms which include sleep disturbance, headache, tinnitus, ear pressure, dizziness, vertigo, nausea, visual blurring, tachycardia, irritability, problems with concentration and memory, and panic attack episodes associated with sensations of internal pulsation or quivering when awake or asleep.
- John Laforet, President of Wind Concerns Ontario sees this report as a good step forward. “Currently in Ontario there are no requirements for addressing wind turbine low frequency sound inside or outside homes. In fact, Ministry of Environment (MOE) field officers can’t properly measure any kind of noise according to a recently published internal Ministry email.”
- “Here in Ontario we have sick people abandoning their homes because of irresponsible wind development,” said Laforet.

What Can You Do?

If the information in this guide concerns you, here are some follow-up steps you can take:

- Visit the website for “Wind Concerns Ontario” <http://windconcernsontario.wordpress.com/> and “Manitoulin Coalition for Safe Energy Alternatives” <http://mcsea.ca/>
- Discuss this with friends and neighbours.
- Download or print this brochure and distribute copies.
- Contact your MPP and municipal representative to express your views and get his or her opinion.
- Carefully consider which candidate you will support in the provincial election on October 6th;
 - The **Liberals** are the **architects of this fiasco**.
 - The **NDP supported the Green Energy Act** and supports **wind energy**.
 - The **Progressive Conservative Party** is the only major party which supports a moratorium on wind development.