



Pierre Poilievre
Member of Parliament
Nepean-Carleton

July 10, 2012

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier, Province of Ontario
Main Legislative Building
Queen's Park, Room 281
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1A1

Mr. McGuinty,

Your government recently asked the federal government, Health Canada, to draft national guidelines to mitigate the possible health impacts of wind turbine noise on residents living near wind turbine projects. A working group of representatives from all levels of government was created to review generally accepted scientific research in order to develop a national approach to this issue. Due to a lack of consensus among the working group, the project was cancelled.

I am pleased to inform you, however, that Health Canada has since decided to work with Statistics Canada to design a health research study that will explore the relationship between noise pollution caused by wind turbines and the health effects reported by, and objectively measured in, Canadians living near wind turbines. The study will be entirely transparent and is being designed by experts in noise, health assessment, clinical medicine and epidemiology. While still in the early planning stages, this study will be helpful to all levels of government, including your own, when determining the placement of industrial wind turbines (IWTs) in the future.

As your Ontario Government continues to promote the expansion of wind power generation across the province, I am concerned that some scientists and physicians are warning about the adverse health risks affecting those who live in close proximity to IWTs. Until the completion of this Health Canada study, I am calling on a moratorium on the Marlborough Wind Farm project proposed for the village of North Gower, located in the City of Ottawa.

I am not the only one who is concerned by this. My colleague Ben Lobb, MP for Huron-Bruce, has also asked for a moratorium on the IWT project in his riding at the Canadian Auto Workers centre in Port Elgin. In this instance, there are 100 families living within the 550 metre setback limit set by your government. (*Protesters take turbine fight to CAW*, The Owen Sound Sun Times, Apr 16, 2012).

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Parliamentary Office

Room 680, La Promenade Building
Ottawa ON, K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-992-2772 Fax: 613-992-1209

Constituency Office

250-B Greenbank Rd, Unit 233
Nepean ON K2H 8X4
Tel.: 613-990-4300 Fax: 613-990-4333



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As you are well aware, the noise limit for IWTs at the nearest house in rural Ontario is 40dBA, which is often described as being equivalent to the noise in a library. The average noise level in a rural community is about 30dBA (*Why Noise Criteria are Necessary for Proper Siting of Wind Turbines*, George W. Kamperman, p.3). So, while “library-level noise” may seem insignificant, a 10dBA increase in noise level represents a doubling of volume. Therefore, an increase to 40dBA in a small community would be noticeable to most, and intolerable to some.

Some reports have acknowledged that the noise pollution from IWTs can cause annoyance, but have then concluded that there are no direct adverse health effects as a result of residing near wind turbines (ie *The Potential Health Impacts of Wind Turbines* by Dr Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Province of Ontario). However, the World Health Organization considers annoyance, in itself, an adverse health effect (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/life-vie/community-urbain-eng.php#he>).

Not all people are affected the same way by increased noise and low frequency noise – some research shows that one in five people are “acutely sensitive to moderately loud noise disturbances” (*Noise Sensitivity Rating of Individuals*, George A. Luz, p.1). In other words, 20% of the population are the most at risk, experiencing: “annoyance, stress, sleep disturbance, headache, tinnitus, ear pressure, dizziness, nausea, visual blurring, tachycardia, irritability, problems with concentration and memory, as panic episodes associated with internal pulsation or quivering when awake or asleep.” (*A summary of new evidence: Adverse health effect and industrial wind turbines*, Carmen M.E. Krogh & Brett S. Horner, p. 11)

In this province alone, more than 130 people have self-reported adverse health effects due to noise pollution from IWTs (*A self-reporting survey of adverse health effects associated with industrial wind turbines: The need for vigilance*, p. 2). In Ontario, the current minimum setback distance of an IWT from the closest home is 550 metres. However, the results from the report mentioned above reveal that self-reported health complaints came from an average distance of 675 metres from the IWT, with other citizens reporting adverse health effects from as far away as five kilometres. Even a 2010 report prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Environment does not deny the health impacts of noise pollution from IWTs, saying that “sound from wind turbines can be expected to contribute to stress related health impacts in some persons” (*Low frequency noise and infrasound associated with wind turbine generator systems: A literature review*, p. ii).

The Marlborough Wind Farm, initiated in 2008 by Prowind Canada, proposes 10 IWTs in close proximity to the village of North Gower. With a population of over 2,000 people (2006 census: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-597/P3.cfm?Lang=E&CTCODE=5598&CACODE=505&PRCODE=35&PC=K0A2T0>), the majority of the

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village is within three kilometres from one or more IWT. What is even more concerning to me is that, according to a map outlining the proposed IWT locations, there are more than 30 families living within 800 metres (<http://northgowerwindactiongroup.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/map-4-property-value-loss-april-24-2012.pdf> - based on information obtained from Prowind Canada). There is currently no start date for construction of these IWTs; Prowind is waiting for approval from the Ontario government before proceeding with the project.

Due to increasing reports of health problems, a lack of consensus on this issue, and the need for properly designed clinical research, I am calling for a moratorium on the Marlborough Wind Farm project in North Gower until conclusive evidence from Health Canada can definitively show that there are no adverse health risks associated with living in close proximity to IWTs.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pierre Poilievre', with a long horizontal line underneath.

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MP Nepean-Carleton

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