

A line in the sand: wind power's ill effects

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Two academics from the same university stand on either side of the divide on whether wind farms have negative health effects. According to a recent report, the two professors—Dr. Bob McMurtry, dean of the medical school at the University of Western Ontario from 1992 to 1999 and Dr. David Colby, an associate professor and medical officer of health in Chatham-Kent—are likely to be witnesses on opposing sides in a potential landmark case in Ontario's Edward County challenging the province's ambitious and controversial Green Energy Act.

Dr. McMurtry, who believes wind farms may bring with them health drawbacks for those living in their vicinity, says both pollution and climate-change could be easily addressed without building wind farms. He's calling on the province—if it does move ahead with its wind energy plans—to spend \$1 million on research to determine how far back turbines need to be to safeguard health.

Current regulations call for a 550-metre setback, but he believes a two-kilometre buffer is needed.

Dr. Colby, on the other hand, reviewed numerous studies on wind turbines, both for the Chatham-Kent council, and later for the wind power associations, and said peer-reviewed studies show no link between ailments and turbines—except for a small number of people upset by the turbines that then created stress, which could be the cause for some of the symptoms.

And though it may appear that the debate on wind turbines is academic, that's certainly not the case. Opposition to wind turbines has been fierce across the province in proposed sites.

That opposition may become even fiercer as the Ontario government continues to offer handsome subsidies to wind energy developers in the effort to shut down the province's coal plants and "green" its image. One report says the Ontario government has, "given its blessing to a wind industry that may build \$20 billion worth of turbines across the province and in its lakes."

Energy Probe is a keen supporter of renewable energy. We believe renewable energy has the ability to diversify our electricity supply, while allowing for more decentralized sources of power for consumers. But we're not in favour of throwing massive subsidies at forms of energy that are not technically or economically feasible.

Read the previous gangrene economy report, "Organized Crime Greasing The Wheels Of Europe's Wind Industry" [here](#). [1]

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