

Not in my neighborhood, please

Dear Editor,

I never thought I would see the day that I would be moved to writing a letter to the editor, but this issue is of great concern to me, and I hope that those politicians in position to make crucial decisions will understand and agree that the quality of people's lives should be of utmost importance.

I have lived in the Creignish/Long Point area of Route 19 for 50 years and feel grateful to be able to enjoy this picturesque community. Most of the families who are living in this area were either born here or settled here and have raised their families and are now retired and growing more elderly. Of course, we love our community and enjoy its peaceful beauty. Hopefully, it will remain that

way!

We are now aware that two companies, Community Wind Farms Inc. and ABO Wind, a German financier, are vying to sell a proposal to Inverness County Council, to build a giant 100-megawatt wind farm project known as the Rhodena Wind Farm in our area. They wish to take advantage of Nova Scotia's renewable rate-based procurement program to build a giant wind farm on 8,000 hectares of Crown and private land east of Route 19.

As it stands now, their claim is that the closest home would be 1,200 meters from any turbine. Should this project be approved, those landowners who own properties adjacent to this Crown land will be denied opportunity to build on or develop

their lands in any way without being affected by gigantic turbines. The proposed wind farm will devalue adjacent properties and make them undesirable for any further development, whether it be the building of new homes or possible businesses.

Rankin MacDonald explained in the March 9th issue of *The Oran* that the provincial government has introduced legislation that would require 80 per cent of electricity to be supplied by renewable energy by 2030. So, these companies are jumping at the opportunity to provide 100 MW of power and make a big financial gain by building a huge wind farm and selling to NS Power.

Just to clarify some statements made in your column, Mr. MacDonald, you stated

that the 18 proposed towers would be 110 meters in height, about the same as Creignish Rear and Port Hawkesbury. I am told that Community Wind has stated: We anticipate the hub height could be anywhere from 100 meters to 120 meters, with a blade length of between 60 and 80 meters. Therefore, an approximate total height range could be between 170 to 200 meters. These new wind turbines are massive! For comparison, they would stand more than twice the height of the Statue of Liberty. Sure, everyone may love to see clean energy produced, but as Rankin MacDonald asked in his article of the March 9th issue, "...is there a cost?" Is anyone asking to have these wind turbines erected in their back yard?

Not very likely, because there are serious risks involved. However, these towers will be erected in the backyard of the residents along Route 19 if these companies are given the go ahead.

It stands to reason that these wind companies are interested in making huge profits and couldn't care less about the concerns of the local people who will be affected by a wind farm in their community. They are not going to present to council or to the local citizens any risks or negative impacts that can occur due to the construction or the presence of huge wind turbines in their neighborhood. But there are risks!

They attempted to impress the Inverness County Council by listing the benefits of having those wind turbines

placed in "our backyards." The benefits they presented were twofold: the creation of jobs and to encourage investment. They were a bit more specific about the type of jobs, mostly short-term jobs that the construction of the project would bring. I question how many people in our rural community of mainly retired senior citizens are looking for employment in these construction jobs. They were remiss to mention even one specific type of investment that this project would bring to the community. This is a popular tourist area and I fail to see how huge wind turbines will benefit the tourist industry. How can these turbines encourage investment in tourism or any other industry for that matter? The

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Not in my neighbourhood... From previous page

representative for the companies also suggested a tax revenue for the county to be possibly as high as \$700,000. Revenue of that amount certainly sounds enticing to the politicians, but should not be the driving factor when it comes to making decisions, especially when the negative effects of such a development pose high risks to the lives of the people and wildlife who will be living here. We are and have been taxpayers too.

I would like to point out that the people who have the most to lose by having this wind farm located in their community have the least to gain. They are mostly seniors and are not seeking the jobs

suggested by these companies. The proclaimed benefits do not help those of us who will be left to live with monstrous turbines.

I have concerns about the impact on our health and the impact on wildlife in our community. I am concerned about how these turbines may adversely affect the wild animals and birds both directly, by collisions, as well as indirectly due to noise pollution, habitat loss and disruption, and reduced survival or reproduction. The mountain area where the Rhodena Wind Farm Project is proposed is a wintering location for numerous White Tail Deer and it is a well-known fact that numer-

ous birds and bats are killed by wind turbines each year.

Will the installation of huge industrial strength wind turbines affect our ground water supply? This should be of major concern for the people who live along Route 19. We are blessed with an abundance of water for our homes from the Creignish mountains. Installing huge turbines means pile-driving massive steel beams into the bedrock. Vibrations from this pile-driving can break up toxic shale below the groundwater and contaminate it. I fear that our wells will be poisoned by this action. There is also the danger of oil spills or leaks of fuel in the installation and

operational phases of these turbines. The thought that our water supply could be harmed is extremely worrisome. What a cost that would be to our environment! Who is prepared to guarantee that our water supply is not in jeopardy?

I have concerns that the health of the people living in nearby communities will be affected by the presence of a wind farm. I do not doubt the testimony from many people in Canada and around the world who are experiencing adverse effects to their health since there were wind turbines built in their communities. There is a list of concerns about health symptoms

associated with exposure to audible noise, low frequency noise and infrasound, shadow flicker and electromagnetic fields. Some of these symptoms include difficulty sleeping, heart pounding, fatigue, depression, sadness, irritability, aggressiveness, cognitive dysfunction, nausea, dizziness, tinnitus, skin irritations, nosebleeds, ringing in ears, headaches, lack of concentration, vertigo, and sleep disruption, to name just some. Why would anyone want to live near a wind farm and risk developing any one of those symptoms? If the companies who are seeking approval to develop this Rhodena Wind Farm Project in Creignish

must obtain permission from any level of government, I expect that that level of government, whether it be municipal, provincial, or federal provide we the people of this community assurances from health authorities, health care experts and clinicians that we will not be placed in a position of potential risks to our health by this said wind farm.

May I suggest to those who disagree with my opposition to The Rhodena Wind Project, please invite these companies to go ahead and build it on their property, but not in my neighborhood.

Marian MacLellan
Long Point