



ENDANGERED TURTLES WIN PROTECTION FROM WIND FARM IN ONTARIO, CANADA

Landmark legal decision overturns government approval of large power project

WELLINGTON, ONTARIO, CANADA, April 27, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ --

A years-long legal battle over a [wind power](#) project by Germany-based wpd in Ontario, Canada, resulted in a ruling by the provincial government's Environmental Review Tribunal yesterday, in favour of protecting an [endangered species](#) of turtle.

In the Tribunal ruling, government approval for 18 of 29 industrial-scale wind turbines in the "White Pines" project was reversed. With 60 percent of the project removed, it may be impossible for the power developer to meet its contractual obligation.

The citizens of Prince Edward County, about two hours east of Toronto, where the project was to be located, fought the wind turbines for almost 10 years, and spent almost \$2 million CAD in legal fees.

"The County" as it is called, on the shores of Lake Ontario, is a stopping place for hundreds of thousands of birds migrating in eastern North America, and was identified as an Important Bird Area by conservation groups. The area is also a habitat for the endangered Blandings turtle, and home to the Little Brown Bat which is on the verge of extirpation.

"This [decision] is clearly a victory for the survival of the Blanding's turtle and many other animal and plant species," said Alliance to Protect Prince Edward County president Gordon Gibbins. "Although the Tribunal decision was specifically concerned with protecting the turtles and their habitat, we are very pleased that indirectly as a result of this decision there will be no turbines in the Prince Edward County Important Bird and Biodiversity Area."

"The Tribunal decision has made it clear that this wind power project was never about protecting the [environment](#)," said Jane Wilson, president of Wind Concerns Ontario, the coalition of community groups concerned about wind power projects.

"The wind power project was always about money. The citizens of Prince Edward County fought hard to protect the environment and wildlife against our own Ministry of the Environment."

Citizen evidence was crucial in bringing forward evidence of harm to the environment in the various appeals of the power project, Wilson says. "The government did little or no oversight on how wildlife is to be protected, and it was the people of Prince Edward County who brought the information to the Tribunal. As a result, in Ontario now, wind power does not automatically override environmental concerns."

Economic impacts were also a concern for the community. The County is a tourist destination with dozens of wineries and cheese establishments; winery owners were concerned about the negative impact of the huge power-generating turbines on the County with its quaint villages and pastoral views as a tourist attraction.

Prince Edward County Mayor Robert Quaiff said, "Our community has been fighting this project for quite some time. I'm glad to see that the Environmental Review Tribunal has recognized and given credence to our concerns."

For more information, visit Wind Concerns Ontario at www.windconcernsontario.ca
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