

APPENDIX G

Public Attitudes of the Proposed Siting of Wind Turbines at the Waterfront in the Riverdale/Beach area, Toronto

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Project Background

The Toronto Renewable energy Co-operative (TREC) and Toronto Hydro have proposed to erect and operate up to three wind turbines on the City of Toronto waterfront. In response, I am undertaking a study of public attitudes towards this project for a report for my Master's of Science Degree in Planning at the University of Toronto. Part of the study entails a survey of one hundred and five households in the Eastern Beaches area where appropriate sites for the wind turbines are being sought.

Methodology

A survey of 21 questions regarding the general use of wind turbines in the City of Toronto and their proposed siting on the waterfront was written in consultation with a supervisor from the University of Toronto and TREC. The survey was sent to City Councillors Irene Jones, Sandra Bussin and Blake Kinahan as well as Marianne Woods from Environment Canada for further input, and suggestions were incorporated.

A sample of households was randomly selected near Ashbridges Bay where there are two proposed sites for the wind turbines. Within this area, two factors influenced which residential streets would be surveyed. First, it was thought that those residents located closer to the proposed sites would be more likely to experience any impacts that might occur from the turbines than occasional users of the Ashbridges Bay Park and beaches area residing further away. Therefore, residents on Kent Rd., Queen St., Woodbine-, Kew Beaches-, Kippendavie-, Kenilworth-, Winnifred-, Caroline-, Berkshire-, Rushbrook-, Curzon-, and Hastings Ave., as well as those in the new residential area at what was previously the Greenwood Race Track were surveyed. Second, in order to obtain a balance between those residents who had received promotional information on the project from TREC and those who had not, streets were equally divided between

these two groups. On November 20 and 21, 1999 a number of volunteers administered the survey in person to household residents.

Survey Results

An assessment of the survey results reveals an overwhelming support for the TREC and Toronto Hydro project. First, on question relating to the general use of wind-generated electricity, significant support was shown. Of the respondents, 79.5% felt that Ontario power utilities should make the expansion of wind-generated electricity a priority. This decision seems to be based on some prior knowledge of wind turbines. Of the respondents, 89.5% indicated they had either heard of (13.3%), seen a picture of (46.7%) or seen a real turbine (27.62%). Furthermore, on questions about pros and cons of using wind turbines, a large portion, 84.76%, identified one or more potential benefits while 40.95% indicated one or more potential negative effects.

Further support was expressed for the actual siting of wind turbines in the City of Toronto itself. Of the respondents, 80% revealed that they actually like the idea of having wind turbines in the city. More specifically, 82% indicated they had no objection to wind turbines being put up on the waterfront.

Finally, and of most direct significance for the proposed siting of wind turbines in that area, is the overwhelming support displayed towards the identified sites. A full 61.9% of the respondents were in favour and an additional 26.7% and 28.57% felt no objection to locating wind turbines at the Ashbridges Bay Sewage Treatment Plant and the TEDCO lands respectively.

Clearly, according to this survey, there is strong support for not only the concept of increasing the availability of wind-energy to the residents of Toronto, but also for locating turbines at these sites on the waterfront.