

Why should we settle for less?

The proposed Green Energy Act regulations will require that wind turbines with the noise rating and number of those that wind developers want to erect in Grey Highlands should be “set back” from homes by a minimum distance of 750 metres.

Well before the current research on health and environmental impacts was known, the Municipal Council of Grey Highlands approved a policy that called for set backs from industrial wind turbines to be a minimum of 300 metres. If the Provincial government now recognizes the need for greater setback distances (for health and environmental reasons), **why should we be settling for any less?**

Why should we allow wind developers to “grandfather” their projects when our health, quality of life, property values and scenic viewscapes are at risk? Does this make sense to you? The rules will henceforth be changed in recognition of experiences elsewhere and greater knowledge of the actual risks.

Perhaps you can now understand the rapid increase in proposed new projects for Grey Highlands and the rush to get them “commenced” via sham public information sessions before the Province finally passes its own regulations.

Even George Smitherman, the architect of the GEA, has said “bigger setbacks are part of the Green Act” and that the wind developers will “have to go back to the drawing board and redesign some projects” (*Macleans*, Aug. 17/09). If Minister Smitherman is saying this, why aren't the politicians in Grey Highlands paying attention?

The so-called “Friends” of Wind Power proudly announce that one of their members will be able to see a turbine from his property 750 metres away. We'd be OK with that distance (a lot safer than 300 metres). And the Province recommends that distance. **So, why should we have to settle for less?**

One of the world's most distinguished earth scientists, James Lovelock, recently wrote: “Europe's massive use of wind as a supplement to base-load electricity will probably be remembered as one of the great follies of the twenty-first century.” Many who have signed leases are now regretting their decisions.

Isn't it time you started asking some hard questions? Start with “Why should we in Grey Highlands settle for less than the province says is the minimum setback distance from residences?” Insist on some accountability from those who are elected to represent your interests and protect your quality of life. Your health, the right to enjoy your property and the future of our environmental treasures depend on it.

A public service message paid for by the citizens who seek to preserve the quality of living in Grey Highlands. People who actually live here and who care about this community.