

## Letter to the Editor

### Birds and Turbines: Not So?

For several years now we in the County have listened to and read statements in local papers about the dangers that wind turbines present to birds. Now it seems that those claims were wrong. According to researcher Dr. Lyle Friesen from the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) and specialist in the conservation of landbirds and their habitats in Ontario, "the damage is minimal"; the numbers are so low that the CWS considered abandoning study of the impacts of wind turbines.

We should not be surprised - the evidence has been around for years. A comprehensive review of the effects of turbines on bird populations was published by Environment Canada in 2007, based on more than 200 peer reviewed references and other sources from around the world. In the report "Wind Turbines and Birds: A Background Review for Environmental Assessment", the authors concluded that "... studies that have been undertaken around the world suggest that, despite a few important exceptions, very low numbers of bird fatalities occur at wind energy facilities" and "the observed mortality cause by wind energy facilities is also very low compared to other existing sources of human-caused avian mortality". In the past, mortality to raptors has often been cited as the big danger; in fact, "In almost all areas, however, raptors are able to avoid wind turbines, resulting in very few or no collisions." The authors also note the importance of appropriate site selection in preventing negative impacts on birds.

Installation of wind turbines can generate much emotion and negative as well as positive reactions. However, for any dialogue to be meaningful - and persuasive - it must be rooted not in passion but in the full range of known facts, presented in an objective and unbiased manner.

- Josef Cihlar

**Windpower** has received another endorsement from a Civil Engineering professor and Director of the Atmosphere/Energy Program at Stanford in California, Mark Z. Jacobson. This is a must read for anyone connected to the Hydro grid as we ultimately must take responsibility for the effects of the emissions produced from energy we consume. As Prof. Jacobson notes, pollution causes over 2.4 million premature deaths worldwide as well as increasing asthma, respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, cancer, hospitalizations, emergency room visits and work days lost. Nations require bold action to combat this epidemic and must "act" to save lives. His attached report states:

§ Wind power is by far the most promising source of energy for electricity and vehicles, performing the best in 7 out of 10 criteria (see Table 4 in section 8.).

§ Jacobson evaluated nine electric power sources and two liquid/fuel options, based on 10 weighted criteria including CO2 emissions, human mortality, environmental footprint, resource abundance, water consumption, operating reliability, effects on wildlife and 4 other measurements.

§ Wind has the lowest lifecycle CO2e among the technologies considered.

§ He describes in detail the advantages and disadvantages, and huge indirect costs, of each technology.

§ He describes at length five methods/solutions for dealing with the intermittency of renewable energy sources (section 10.).

It's a long, technical/analytical read, but this excellent, independent/academic work is summarized by Renewable Energy World in this article: <http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/rea/news/print?id=54292>

[www.renewableenergyworld.com/rea/news/print?id=54292](http://www.renewableenergyworld.com/rea/news/print?id=54292)

Or download full report:

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/efmh/jacobson/EnergyEnvRev0908.pdf>

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some point (perhaps as soon as late April) featuring a cross section of these performers—although no one should let fear of performance dampen their will, he will provide backup and help with arrangements or the songwriters can arrange to have someone else perform their tunes as well if that is necessary for any reason.

He has already had help with this project, in its initial stages, from Steve Campbell, Paul Johnson and the

local papers and he asked that I pass on this email to any Fogeys out there who might be persuaded to participate!!

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