

Wind power on agenda at Stouffville hydro meeting

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Whitchurch-Stouffville's Environmental Advisory Committee is hosting Ravi Mark Singh of the Ontario Clean Air Alliance in the town's Sandiford Drive council chambers. Mr. Singh will be speaking about new options electricity deregulation presents to consumers and the environmental consequences of choices they could make.

Many environmentalists have been optimistic that deregulation will create opportunities for green power, such as wind turbines or small hydro-electric projects, to enter the market-place.

"Previously we didn't have a choice," said Michael Kennedy, secretary of the EAC. "Wind power might be more expensive, but it's greener."

Mr. Kahnert admitted there is a split in the environmental

movement over whether deregulation should be welcomed. But he said he couldn't imagine why the province's coal-fired power plants — considered Ontario's largest single source of air pollution while running less than half the time — would not run 100 per cent of the time under profit-seeking private ownership.

He argued the government, without privatizing the system, could pay for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs through a small "public benefits charge" of about \$2.20 per household per month. The province should legislate energy efficiency standards for appliances and buildings, and allow customers with their own renewable energy equipment — such as a solar panel or wind turbine — to feed any surpluses they produce back into the system, a practice known as net billing.

Taking these conservation-

minded steps and others will certainly be expensive, Mr. Kahnert said. "But it's not going to be anywhere near as expensive as private power."

The government's commitment to green power seems dubious so far, according to Sutton resident Brent Kopperson, part of a group evaluating possible sites in York Region for a wind farm it hopes to see managed by a cooperative.

Mr. Kopperson said privatization does not need to accompany deregulation. And although some people are hopeful deregulation will lead to distribution of cleaner energy, he believes Ontario may be forced to produce dirtier forms of power for American consumption.

"Ultimately we will lose control of this resource and U.S. demand will dictate what happens here," he said this week.

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Warmly,
John Brandemark
General Manager

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