

PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL
March 25, 2008

Your Worship, Council and Administration; My name is Brent DeNure, Chair of the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce, representing over 500 business members in our community.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this evening's forum sharing our opinion with regard to the impact the wind farm initiative will have on our community. I would like to start by indicating that we looked at the collective efforts of the wind turbine, wind energy industry as one complete proposal while making every effort to become as informed as possible with an overwhelming amount of conflicting information. We feel this endeavor is not limited to a CK issue, but one of global realm. The sources from which we developed our position ranged from local health, energy and business experts to the opinions expressed by wind farm knowledgeable Chambers of Commerce from California to Australia offering the socio-economic and health impacts we should expect based on their experience. We also had Chamber representation at the Port Burwell project, a number of special interest group meetings, and in-house presentations. Our Chamber has invested a significant number of hours researching the topic at hand.

As championed at the Feb 11th Council meeting and subsequently made public by the media, there is a vocal concern for the uncertainty that "the flicker effect", "vibroacoustic disease" and other phenomena will have on the well being of our community. As a Chamber, our forte is business and we feel any potential health impacts

– both good and bad – are beyond our realm of expertise and best left to recognized professionals of the healthcare arena. We can say that, in speaking to the President and CEO of the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance he noted that wind energy is the healthiest, cleanest source of energy, while on a national level, the David Suzuki Foundation also endorses wind farms as a valuable source of energy while not indicating any threat to our health. Additionally, any Chambers of Commerce we contacted who have had turbines in use for several years shared a common theme that their communities are enjoying good health and increased tourism.

I am sure we all remember August 14, 2003 as the date when, without warning, much of Ontario and the Eastern Seaboard of the US went dark. Our region, nation and hemisphere are all under immense pressure to produce the energy required allowing us to support our accustomed lifestyle. There are thousands of electrically contingent conveniences we take for granted every day. After talking with those expertly involved with the distribution of electricity, I don't think many of us realize just how delicate the balance is that we, as society, handle every day between having power when we need it and having to scroll through revolving brown-out periods as demonstrated in recent time by the state of California. Ontario has a serious energy issue and no matter what anyone's opinion may be with regard to the look or efficiency of wind turbines, they are an example of renewable energy and the wind patterns of Chatham-Kent are a resource and commodity we can offer.

This energy resource, albeit relatively new, compliments our local bounty of fresh water, rich farmland and even the oil and natural gas deposits that have a stealthy prevalence around our municipality. For over a century, local landowners have been able to exercise their individual right to lease property for the construction of oil wells and natural gas lines. With the current set of legislation and municipal by-laws, the wind turbine project is no different. It is the right - and at the discretion - of the landowner to decide for him/herself whether or not to engage in a contractual agreement with a wind turbine company. As with any other business that might startup in Chatham-Kent, the details of the operation is not the domain of the Chamber, special interest groups or even this honourable Council. It is to each individual to bear the responsibility of making the best decision after weighing all internal and external factors. Making a living today in agriculture is challenging to say the least and we respect the right of the landowner to make this decision. We are also confident that in the great span of Chatham-Kent, there are many sites that fit the needs and wishes for a mutually beneficial agreement among landowners, turbine companies and our community.

There have been notions of 450-600 turbines allocated for Chatham-Kent. However, our research confirms that the current grid in Chatham-Kent and Essex Counties **combined** can only support drawing power from no more than 350 Turbines at 2 mega-watts each. With the reality of this limit, we look forward to the initial lot of approved turbines to have a window of opportunity to prove themselves as being as beneficial as they claim to be. A graduated and calculated phase-in of this new endeavor makes sense for all.

In conclusion, we encourage the municipality to consider the following:

- Proceed with calculation before facilitating an increase in grid capacity allowing the community to decide how involved we ultimately want to be. This program is made possible only because of the absolutely immense provincial subsidies. Our research indicates that there is a period after the 10-year mark where the initially extraordinarily rich provincial subsidies diminish to point at which profitability of each turbine slips into question.
- Establish proper and detailed contracts with the companies for ensured protection should the wind turbine project be sold to a third party which distances itself from the initial scope and desires of the companies we are dealing with today.
- Develop a more detailed plan with regard to preferred sites for the turbines and possibly explore a “tiered” tax structure so the turbine companies have to pay an augmented rate for those turbines close to the densely populated areas as well as areas of developer appeal. Based on the economic impact each turbine produces for the municipality on a per-annum basis, it would be an absolute shame to lose out on potential municipal tax revenue and long-term local employment opportunities from pending developments in Rondeau, Erieau, Mitchell’s Bay and along other waterfront areas as a result of alteration to some of our most attractive landscape. In short, turbine tax revenue should be geared to offset any potentially superior tax loss.

- Good fences make good neighbors. Once again, we expect and encourage all approached landowners to make an informed decision made with proper legal counsel and after having weighed all economic and social impacts that will be realized 5-10-15 years after completion of the project. Also, we expect the municipality is making every effort to protect the medium to long-term best interests of the citizens of Chatham-Kent. We understand the tax revenue gained by the municipality is “found money”. Also, we understand that it is gratifying to share that adherence to the strategic plan has resulted in a \$300M investment in the community. However, this \$300M investment will not significantly impact the long-term, reasonably paying permanent jobs so desperately needed in this community. We hope that any perceived success from the wind turbine project will not draw focus away from the importance of continued efforts to attract industry or growth in additional sectors of eco-friendly power generation such as solar farms and other bio-friendly sources.
- Finally, we would also like to encourage all wind energy companies coming into Chatham-Kent to have a constant long term presence in the community and to continue to conduct affairs in good faith practicing as valuable and welcomed corporate citizens in the community.

Thank you for your time and attention.