

## Provincial Approvals Processes

To develop an Industrial Windpower project, a developer must obtain **2 basic types of Provincial approvals**,

1. **Energy approvals** to sell the power to the provincial system- this is the Feed in Tariff (FIT) Program
2. **Planning approval** - includes environmental and siting approvals- the Renewable Energy Approvals (REA)

**Last year (2009) the process for both planning and energy approvals changed significantly**

### Energy Approvals,

- In Ontario today renewable energy projects follow what is called the **Feed in Tariff (FIT) Program**
- there are **2 basic requirements, the energy contract and the permission to connect to electrical system**
- the energy contract is with the **Ontario Power Authority (OPA) to buy/sell energy**
- **Thunder Bay Hydro has to connect this project to its electrical system** but gets to say where and how

**The FIT program for renewable energy projects, including windpower**

- different types of **renewable energy projects treated differently**
- **This project will receive 13.5 cents/kWh,**
- The average price of power in Ontario about **4 cents/kWh**
- **Guaranteed contracts for 20 years** with inflation increases – may be paid even if power isn't needed
- **Developers do not pay for entire cost of electrical connection** – subsidized by local ratepayers

**How have energy approvals changed?**

**Before Sept 2009** this windpower project was subject to the **Renewable Energy Standard Offer Program (RESOP)**

- The **RESOP provided 11 cents /kWh** to windpower projects
- **Contracts for multiple years**
- **Developer had to pay for entire cost of electrical connection**

**After Sept 2009** the province switched to the **Feed in Tariff (FIT) Program**

- **almost 20% increase in power price** for windpower – a viable project became financially lucrative
- **20 year contract guaranteed price** with inflation increases
- **Saves the developer \$2.4 million electrical connection cost**—now a cost for Thunder Bay Hydro

**What has this developer done about its energy approvals?**

- **Applied for 76.5 MW project** at Big Thunder Wind Park (51 towers) – applied last year to OPA
- Received **energy contract offer of 16.5 MW from OPA** (11 towers) – from OPA in early 2010
- **Awaiting decision from OPA** for remaining 60 MW (40 towers) (expected summer 2010)
- **Publicly states project is 27MW**, no acknowledgement of approved (16.5MW) or intended (76.5MW) project
- Contacted **Thunder Bay Hydro May 2010 for electrical connection studies** –16MW or 27MW or 76 MW?
- **Cost and location of Thunder Bay Hydro connection unknown** – Hydro will not release this information

## Planning Approvals

- In Ontario today, planning approvals for windpower are called the **Renewable Energy Approvals (REA)**
- REA requires a developer to **submit a number of studies and documents** –considered before approvals by MOE
- The REA process was **developed to replace the EA** – the Environmental Assessment process
- **No REA approved for any class 4 wind power project** – there is no example of what is considered adequate
- **The technical guidelines have not been issued** (the ‘how to’ do an REA, they are still in draft)

### How have planning approvals changed?

**Before Sept 2009**, this windpower project was subject to the **Environmental Assessment Act (EAA)**

- The EAA had **various levels of study and investigation** required, from the basic (Environmental Screening) to the complex (a Full Environmental Assessment) depending on how big or complicated a project was
- The **key** part of an environmental assessment was the **requirement to address and mitigate concerns** – environmental, social and economic –public consultation was included in the process
- Developer had to look at ways to **avoid or to minimize the impact** of their project

**After Sept 2009**, windpower projects are subject to the **Renewable Energy Approvals (REA) process**

- **developed to speed up approvals and prevent projects from being stopped because of health or environmental or local planning concerns-** all necessary provincial approvals part of REA
- an approvals, not an assessment process – **THERE WILL BE NO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**
- based on power and noise output **prescribes setbacks from people, water and certain environmental concerns**
- a **number of reports prepared** as part of the approvals application
- There is **NO requirement to address or mitigate any concerns** – only to document in the Consultation Report
- **Must be approved unless it doesn’t meet setback, or if can be proven to have serious and irreversible harm**

### How does the Big Thunder Development fit in?

- project **started under the old rules** – planning and energy approvals rules- and **will finish under new rules**
- Ministry of the Environment identified it as a **‘transitional project’- what this means is not clear** for public consultation, environmental studies, mitigation of impacts

### Under the new rules,

- **public notices are required to provide specific information**, in a minimum number of newspapers and times
- required to provide **notice directly to all property owners within 120 metres** of the project
- project **includes the electrical connections along roads and under the Kaminisitiquia Rr and into McKellar**
- There must be **at least 2 REA Open Houses** –not the same open house on 2 days
- **First REA Open House must have the Project Development Report (PDR) available** (issued May 2010)
- **Second REA Open House must be after PDR and have all the REA reports** (incorporates PDR comments)

### What has this project done so far?

- **Property owner notice by flyers**, but unsure of distribution - **No direct notice** to all adjacent property owners
- 2 open houses with **no specific information about location and potential impacts**
- **Public consultation using the media and behind closed doors** with the City and some stakeholder groups
- Issue and **recall of Environmental Study Report** September 2009 – eight months delay for REA reports issued
- Issue of the **Project Development Report and other REA reports** **May 2010**
- Planned **FINAL open houses in August 2010** (this is the first open house with real info- it should not be the last)

### What should this project do now under the REA rules?

- **Now** – **Notice Delivered to all within 120 m of project** – including along new electrical lines McKellar/Neebing
- **Now** - **The FIRST REA Open House, to present the Project Development Report**, and get feedback. This is an important step in the REA process, one which Horizon is apparently planning to avoid.
- **After First REA Open Houses**– **reissue REA reports with changes based on comments from Open House**
- **Late summer or fall at earliest** - have the **SECOND REA Open House** at least 60 days after reissuing the revised REA reports – **and before the official comment period ends**

**Previous open houses did not present enough specific information as required by REA**  
**The open houses in August should be the FIRST REA Open Houses – not the LAST!**  
**CONTACT your MPP or the MOE and demand this – TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE**