

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the province of Ontario must impose a moratorium on all new wind turbine projects in Ontario until such time as Ontario's chief medical officer of health, the Ministry of Health ... and the Ministry of the Environment have stated that wind turbines do not have any adverse health effects on people who live near them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Murdoch moves private members' notice of motion number 116. Pursuant to standing order number 98, Mr. Murdoch, you have up to 12 minutes for your presentation.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: First I'd just like to tell the assembly how this happened. I have a good friend and mate here, John O'Toole, who phoned me a couple of weeks ago. John wanted to change private members' bills with me. At that point I really hadn't thought of mine-mine was going to be in November-and I actually told John no. But as most people here will know, John O'Toole is pretty persistent, so he decided to phone me himself. When I got that, I thought, "Well, he must really want to change, and he must have some ideas." I was at home and I had to think. It didn't take me too long, though, to think about what I would do. I phoned John back and said, "Hey, I've got an idea."

You see, for some time now, my offices at Queen's Park and Owen Sound have been getting letters and calls from people living near industrial wind turbines, about the noise levels making them sick. The people who live close to these massive structures are complaining about experiencing a number of health problems, most commonly sleep-how do you say that word?

Interjection: Deprivation.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: -deprivation-I'd better say that word right, because we want to know what it is-cardiac problems, nausea, severe headaches. All of the negative health effects experienced by these people have been compiled and reported on in several published reports, which I'm sure most of you have either read or heard about. One of the published reports is on the way to your offices. It'll come in a green folder. I've taken the liberty of mailing it to everyone in this assembly so that you will get a copy of it. Hopefully you will read it.

I initially told the constituents there was nothing within my legislative power that I could do to help change the situation: I could not scrap the Green Energy Act. After explaining this fact to them, I'd always refer them to the man in charge of the energy file, Mr.

George Smitherman, the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, who has been handed sweeping powers and absolute control over industrial wind projects in Ontario. As you know, when we passed Bill 150 you gave George all the power he needs and overruled any municipalities which may have different ideas. They may want to look at some of these things, but this assembly, when it voted in favour of Bill 150, gave the power to the minister. I told the people, my constituents, that he was the only one who could mitigate their suffering by undoing the regulations, changing the setbacks and ordering these

massive wind structures to be erected further away from peoples' homes. But his office dithered and nothing was done.

When I called back my friend the member for Durham, I told him I was going to introduce a resolution to call for a moratorium on wind farm development in Ontario until such time as our chief medical officer of health of Ontario stated publicly that wind turbines are not making people sick. Now, I feel that she should be in control of this, because if we're going to make people sick by doing something, then she's going to get this on her lap to sort out. As you know, when SARS comes along or any of the other problems we have, it always goes to our chief medical officer, so I believe that she should be in the loop on this. If she doesn't have problems maybe there are no problems, but we'll get to her just a little later on here.

Since announcing my intention to do this, many members of this House have approached me to say, "You know, this is a good idea." I wish they'd thought of it first, especially John. John O'Toole is always telling me things like that, because John just had one of his bills pass: the cellphone bill. That was John O'Toole's idea, but the government of the day took it; it took a good idea from a Conservative and made it law. I don't know whether it's such a good idea or not, but I didn't get a chance-I wasn't here the day they voted on it; I may not have. But John was the one who thought about that, so you've got to give John credit.

The first member to say that to me was the member from Durham. You will hear from some of them in a short while. Some you have already heard from, such as member Lisa MacLeod from Nepean-Carleton. She spoke about the effects of wind turbines in this House the other day and she supports my resolution, along with my friend in the chair today, Jim Wilson, who doesn't get a chance to debate it today because he is in the chair doing his job, but he has indicated to me that he would support this resolution if he had a chance.

Also, my resolution has been supported by Grey Bruce medical officer of health Dr. Hazel Lynn. She's been at many of the meetings that have happened in my constituency and said there seem to be people who have problems with this, but it's not her mandate to do anything at this time. But if the chief medical officer of Ontario takes it as her mandate, then she will get involved, and I understand from the chief medical officer that she, in the very near future, is going to have a meeting with the other medical officers across Ontario to discuss this very project.

As you know, a lot of your constituents have come to different members, all members-maybe not so much the members in the big cities, but all the rural members and northern members here must have been contacted by some of these people, because we have them in the House today from all over Ontario. It's not just Grey and Bruce; this is an Ontario problem, and it's all to do with the Green Energy Act and what the regulations say. They ignored the people who said they had problems with this and went ahead and gave all the powers to one minister to go ahead and put them wherever he feels like.

We talked about the chief medical officer of health. A member from the Ministry of Health's so-called-what do they call him? He was not an adviser; he had come out with whatever he felt that the minister should say. But this gentleman two days ago told the media-

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It's called a spin doctor.

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Mr. Bill Murdoch: Spin doctor: Is that what they're called? Yes, I guess so. I was trying to be nice so far, but the spin doctors in the government.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: You're trying to be nice?

Mr. Bill Murdoch: So far, anyway. I'm hoping the government will vote for this resolution today, because it's not a hard resolution to vote for. If you're going to make people sick, maybe we should look at that before we continue on. It's not a hard thing to do.

But anyway, the spin doctors from the Ministry of Health informed the media that our chief medical officer was onside. He said absolutely, she was. If you don't believe me, look at some reports. Lorrie Goldstein in the Toronto Sun wrote that. He said he asked this gentleman and he said, "Absolutely, she's onside." Isn't this funny? Yesterday, the chief medical officer was in estimates and she was asked if she was onside. She said, "No, we're still studying it." That's right from her. So somebody at the ministry is leading us astray.

You wouldn't want to say they lied; it would be bad to say something like that, and I never want to say that in the House, but something happened. They got a different opinion. Something must have happened. Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't want to get you upset by anything like that and I would never say that anybody in this House would do that, but somebody who maybe works for people in this House may have done that. At least they misled the media and said that she's onside. But yesterday, in a committee hearing-it was estimates, and Christine Elliott asked a question. Let's see; we'll just find it here.

This is what the member for Whitby-Oshawa, Ms. Elliott, asked the chief medical officer of health during estimates on Tuesday, October 27: "So at the moment you don't have a formal position?" Response: "No, we're still reviewing."

That fits right in with my resolution. All I'm saying is that we put a moratorium on any new wind turbines until the medical officer of health for Ontario gets a chance to come up with her opinion of whether there are problems with it or there aren't problems with it. I'm not a doctor, so I don't know. But you see a lot of people here who claim that they have problems, so they can't all be dreaming. There must be something to this.

I don't know whether we need a new report and somebody to run around Ontario to look at a report, because there must be tons of them out of Europe. There are all kinds of windmills in Europe. Do we need to do that? I'm not sure, but let the medical officer tell us what she wants. Until she does that, I'm claiming that we shouldn't build any new ones, because in the McGuinty era, as I understand it, he wants, what is it, 7,000 of them so he

can get rid of the coal-fired generators? Which he promised to do, which he hasn't done-another broken promise. Maybe he doesn't want 7,000 turbines; I don't know. You can't believe him. He tells you one thing and does something different. But if they even want 1,000 more by next year, does that mean there are going to be 2,000 or 3,000 people sick? I don't know, but that's why we have a chief medical officer here: to tell us. I think we had better stop.

I've been told, "If we put a moratorium on, there are all these jobs that are going to be lost," and things like this. If we lose a job but we keep somebody from getting sick, I think that's a heck of a lot better. I don't think jobs should override people getting sick. The other one I heard was, "If we close down the coal-fired generating plants, we'll make people better." Maybe that's true, but do we make other people sick just because we're going to close them down and put in all these wind farms? I'm not one to say that they're going to make them sick, but I think that's why we have a chief medical officer: to do that. I think that's what should be done, and I would hope that in this House, like-minded people-we're all here to look after people in Ontario. It's not just Grey, Bruce and Owen Sound; we're looking after everybody in rural and northern Ontario. I understand there's one to go down here in the city in the Scarborough Bluffs, if I'm not mistaken. There's someone in Ms. Best's riding, so I'm sure she'll be here to vote for this and tell us what she wants done. That's why I think we need a moratorium.

The other thing is, if you don't put a moratorium on, then we'll drag it out forever. Should we produce more wind farms just because we want to drag it out and because they need more? I don't think we should be doing that. I think we should put a moratorium on and find out the facts before we do any more. So I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for being able to talk.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I know Bill's popular, but I'll just remind you that you can't clap or participate in the debate, please.

The honourable member for Oak Ridges-Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's my pleasure to enter into what I think is a very important debate which is occurring this afternoon. I would like to thank the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound in bringing this concern forward. I want to acknowledge the concern, which is entirely valid. Many constituents obviously across Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound feel very strongly on this issue, and many Ontarians are also extremely concerned about the health effects of wind turbines, whether there are any. They want some debate on the matter. I think I can understand this fully. I am the former medical officer of health for York region. In that capacity, I often had to look at situations where there might be some scientific ambiguity and respond in a responsible way to those concerns. I think we know that when people see 18-metre wind turbines dotting the landscape, they are naturally anxious about any potential health effects. I'm very familiar with the precautionary principle that, at all possible times, we do not want to inflict any harm on the population.

I used that as the former medical officer of health as it related to electromagnetic fields from high-voltage transmission lines.

When I was appointed parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment, this was actually one of the first areas that I wanted to look at and be briefed on. What I found was that there was a very excellent review of the evidence by Dr. Ray Copes and Karen Rideout from the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health, which is an arm's-length agency funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. They conducted this review on behalf of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion. They looked specifically at the areas of concern, in particular, sound, noise levels, intensity, low-frequency noise, infrasound, electromagnetic field exposure, shadow, flicker, icing of the turbine blades, structural failure and so on, and they came to a conclusion. They came to several, but the one that I want to address at this point, because I know many of my colleagues want to enter into this debate, was their conclusion that, based on best available evidence, any identified risk can be addressed through siting or setbacks and operating practices.

I was pleased to learn-and I'm sure this will be very reassuring for the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound-that, in fact, the chief medical officer of health, Dr. Arlene King, on October 21 this year, wrote to medical officers of health and environmental health directors. I'll quote directly from her letter:

"The public health division, in collaboration of the Ministry of the Environment and Energy and Infrastructure and with the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, has reviewed the concerns expressed by some regarding health impacts of wind turbines, specifically wind turbine farms. A status update is being provided at this time so as to support common levels of information and public communication."
She goes on to say, "The literature review revealed that while there are anecdotal reports of symptoms such as sleep disturbance, headaches, dizziness, anxiety, concentration and learning problems, and tinnitus"-that's ringing in your ears-"there is no scientific evidence, to date, to demonstrate a causal association between wind turbine noise and adverse health effects. A few Swedish studies reported that noise from wind turbines is annoying to some people."

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I know that the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound referred to some comments made by Dr. King at the estimates committee, and I do have, from that transcript from October 27, a clarification that she gave to some of her previous comments. In response to Mr. Jim Brownell's question related to a causal association between turbine noise and adverse health effects, Dr. King said the following:

"Yes, in terms of the existing literature right now, we have not found an association between adverse health effects and wind turbines. We're continuing, again, to review that information, as I said earlier, and determine where there may be gaps in the literature that

exist in order to be able to develop a common view among myself and all of my medical officer of health colleagues across our province."

Our government has made very stringent setbacks to address the concern raised by Dr. Copes-550 metres-with noise at the periphery of the property of 40 decibels. We are also absolutely committed to establishing a research chair in conjunction with the Ontario council of universities. This is not the time for us to succumb to analysis paralysis; it is the time for us to move forward based on what we know, and I can assure this House that in my capacity as parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of the Environment, I will be urging the establishment of that research chair at the earliest opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I welcome the opportunity to talk to this one, and I want to say at the outset that I support this resolution in its intention. As you know, it's a resolution to provide some answers to questions with respect to health and the impact of these wind turbines, given the deluge of disturbing reports of the effects from those and many people in my area in Haldimand-Norfolk. I know people are here today from my area who live in close proximity to these provincially approved wind turbines, and given the reported plans locally for another 200 or more turbines on or adjacent to Lake Erie-there are plans for 200 to be built offshore. We already have-and I haven't counted them all; I'm not sure-80 or 90 that stretch from Lowbanks, Dunnville, right through to the Port Burwell area in Elgin county.

Given that, I do feel it's incumbent on this government, as the resolution states, to impose a moratorium on all new wind turbine projects in Ontario until such time as the chief medical officer of health, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Environment have stated that wind turbines do not have any adverse health effects on the people who live near them.

If the minister is confident that there is no health impact, then we very simply ask: Say so, tell us. Let us know definitively. If not, it bears investigation, and there's nothing wrong with neutral, objective, research evidence. We're not scientists. Bodies of work are out there, and for us to make decisions, we need those kinds of facts. The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound indicated that the government has a responsibility as well as a mandate to investigate such claims. We've heard the claims of sleep deprivation, heart palpitations, things like that.

Mr. McGuinty did promise a number of months ago to set up an academic research chair. I think that's a good idea. I spent 20 years with a research organization, and it's incumbent on us to have access to the best scientific information available. Regrettably, we know this government's track record as far as keeping promises; there is no research chair. I don't know whether the Premier has any real intention of keeping that one, and providing us with the resultant scientific information that has been promised to us.

Many of us in rural Ontario call these turbines neighbours—they're 300 feet tall. You don't really have to be a scientist to question the possible impact of not only the massive arms of these turbines, but the generator itself. You can hear the dull roar, the grinding of the gears, the mechanical mechanism within these structures. I don't have the answers to a lot of this. I think it's important that we be provided with this kind of information.

We've heard of Dr. Robert McMurtry, former dean of medicine, University of Western Ontario. He has called on the province to undertake an independent epidemiological study on whether noise and low-frequency vibrations do have a negative impact on health. I'll just cut to the chase. I know other people are speaking. One person here today, Stephana Johnston from Clear Creek, is in the visitors' gallery. I think everybody knows where Clear Creek is, down on Lake Erie. She has a proposal. A turbine town needs to be purchased as an experimental facility: "Is it ideal? With 18 [turbines] within a three-kilometre radius of a few varied types of residences, some of the present residents might volunteer to stay on as guinea pigs for the experimental phase. "The design of the experiment would have to be done with extreme care by an arm's-length neutral research body so that all sides of the debate will be convinced with the results.

"Let's stop the nickel-and-dime waste, the Mickey Mouse measurements and get down to the really hard work of a conclusive experiment here."

I agree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

I have to say first off that I have tremendous respect for Mr. Murdoch, and I'm not being coy or playing games. You may be one of the shrewdest political people in this House. I've watched your career. You've survived purges, you've survived faith-based funding for schools, so obviously you're a man who tests the political currents on a regular basis. Mr. Gilles Bisson: He had his own independent party.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes. He may be one of the only fourth-party members in this House who has gone through election cycles and come back triumphant. I disagree with you but I respect you.

There are people who have come here today who travelled a good distance. They didn't come here because they like travelling; they came here because they have serious concerns, and I say to them, with great respect, that I disagree with you, but I also recognize that you're not here on a frivolous basis; you're here because you have a point of view that you want to have expressed, and I think Mr. Murdoch has done you well in doing that.

I'm in a situation where I have actually had an opportunity to listen to a number of these arguments and debates. I had the opportunity-the honour-to sit on the committee that travelled around Ontario and listened to the presentations on the Green Energy Act, listened to people who were dealing with a variety of problems, both with wind turbines and other forms of generation. I can see a member from south Mississauga who is here, who is dealing with a proposed gas-fired power plant in his riding. I have had to have that battle myself, and I know that when people are dealing with technologies, questions come up-substantial questions, sometimes; not substantial otherwise, but questions that people clearly care about.

There were people who came to the Green Energy Act hearings from rural areas-farmers-who wanted wind turbines built on their properties because they wanted the revenue to help ensure they could stay on the land. I have had farmers call me who are upset by the setbacks put in place by this provincial government because they wanted more wind turbines on their land so that they could stay on that land.

In the state of Iowa in the United States, the wind industry is a substantial part of that agricultural state's economy. Farmers refer to the wind turbines as their second harvest. I had an opportunity a few years ago to work in Ottawa as a climate adviser to Jack Layton. I had an opportunity then to meet with farmers from Pincher Creek, Alberta. They were there on the Hill lobbying for more wind investment because they said, as cattle farmers, those farmers-

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I'd just remind the members in the gallery: Please do not participate in the debate. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Those farmers from Pincher Creek said that if they had not had wind turbines on their property, they would have lost their farms; they would have lost cattle operations that had been in their families for generations. They wanted that investment so that they could maintain the rural life that they valued so profoundly.

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I have to say to you that there is no point in telling people that they don't feel something they feel, and if people here feel irritated by, sick from or annoyed with wind turbines, they simply feel that.

I'm going to set out my arguments and do it in the best way I can to ensure that people who listen to this understand where I'm coming from and where my party is coming from. We face substantial public health problems in Ontario. The Ontario Medical Association has projected that something like 9,000 people a year die in Ontario from air pollution-9,000. That's a lot of deaths. And there are many who are sickened. If you have 9,000 die, you probably have tens of thousands who have asthma, who have heart problems, who have respiratory problems, who have to go to the hospital. The OMA calculates the cost

of that smog in the billions of dollars in this province. So we face a very substantial public health issue right now. This is not something that we need to debate. Everyone in the House can read the medical literature; they can see the simple reality. We have to move very quickly to move away from fossil fuels in this province because people are being killed by the fossil fuel effluent that we dump into the atmosphere.

There is a desperate need to move on climate change. For those who were here for the earlier debate, I won't go through all of the issues that were put on the table. I can say in passing that in this province and in this country, inaction on climate change will mean a substantial drop in our standard of living. It will mean a further impoverishment of rural Ontario. It will mean substantial reductions in forest cover in this province and all the implications it has for the remaining forest industry. Those two necessities, those two issues, drive the need to rapidly transition to an economy that's based on renewable power, and wind power is one of the most advanced, most developed technologies that we have at hand to move rapidly.

On that basis alone-the need to deal with thousands of deaths and to head off the loss of stability in our society-I support rapid deployment of wind power. In fact, I have publicly said in my riding, in this city, that I support wind power in my riding. And quite frankly, as many in this House will know, I fought aggressively against the gas-fired power plant in my riding and know without any doubt whatsoever that my constituents would have supported wind turbines in the riding, and that they understand, from their experience with the one wind turbine we have in this city-and we need many more-the implications and the advantages to them of having more wind power in urban environments. I've had an opportunity over the last decade and a half to speak with environmentalists in Europe, to talk with those who have, since the early 1980s, lived in a situation where more and more wind turbines have been deployed-in some areas of Denmark, at a level far denser than anything we see here in Ontario. I've talked to people whose primary focus in their environmental activity is population health, who research toxic chemicals, who work on new developments, new problems with toxic chemicals.

Wind turbines are not an issue as a health issue in European jurisdictions. There are disputes. I won't argue that. There are very different views on how the landscape should look. There are very different feelings about how the wind turbines should be owned, but in my personal conversations with people-and frankly, in asking the legislative library to do the research and bring me the reports from the Journal of the American Medical Association, the Lancet and others, I don't see in the literature any epidemiological evidence that, in fact, we have a health problem that one could classify at the same level as what we're getting from air pollution now.

If there is a problem and if people are here, they must be experiencing something. I have to say that the symptoms that have been described are similar to those I experience as a city resident living on a very busy street. There is noise, and it is unpredictable; sometimes loud, sometimes quiet. I found it very annoying to live on busy streets. It just is; that's the reality.

I've disagreed with Mr. Murdoch, and I've disagreed with the argument that has been made. I want to talk about potential common ground; we can spend all our time arguing, but I always find it a lot more productive to set out, "Okay, so where can we go?" To those who are concerned about far greater investment in wind turbines, who want to limit the amount of investment we have in generation in this society, I say there is common ground to push this Liberal government and any government that happens to be elected in the future to dramatically accelerate efforts at energy efficiency. A number of reports have come forward in the last few years credibly saying that you could cut electricity consumption in this province by 40%. That would have a substantial impact on future investment in any form of generation technology. That is of consequence for us. Those of you, like Mr. Murdoch, who are concerned about the issue of power generation should be aware that this government doesn't have that as a goal. It should have that as a goal. I support the investment in wind, but even more, I support the investment in energy efficiency. You should know-Mr. Murdoch may know-that when we had the Green Energy Act hearings, we had credible testimony that the energy efficiency codes for buildings in this province are not enforced. When new buildings are built that are electrically heated or cooled, the building code for efficiency is not enforced, which drives up the amount of power needed, which drives up the amount of generation that's invested in. There needs to be credible enforcement of the energy efficiency code. We need to be looking at cogeneration. Right now there are hospitals across this province that run boilers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Those hospitals could be making power at the same time they are making heat. They'd provide themselves with emergency power and feed power into the grid. It would not increase the burden on our environment, and it would reduce the demand for new electricity generation. The strategy of energy efficiency, of maximizing the use of any fuel we do burn, is a way one could find common ground to reduce the amount of new generation capacity that is invested in, in this province.

This is going to be an ongoing question, because people will disagree about land use zoning and disagree about this technology. But we in this province have to take action to make sure we clean up the air in this province. One of the best avenues we have right now, one of the fastest to deploy and least expensive, aside from energy efficiency, is wind, and we need to take that option.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I want to thank the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for his motives in bringing forward this resolution. Protecting public health and safety is, of course, one of the most important duties we have as legislators. I want to thank the people who made the long trek down to Queen's Park, who are here because they believe in the issues they are fighting for.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care listened to individuals and groups with concerns about wind turbines. I don't want to get into that, because my learned colleague Dr. Helena Jaczek has gone into the health issues in the debate today. I want to speak more as an engineer and as someone who has been working with the Green Energy Act,

and more on the setbacks-the setbacks have been established across this province. I want to talk more about the reasons that Ontario strongly supports wind power in the first place. We just heard from the member for Toronto-Danforth about the reasons we have to get more clean energy available for Ontario and get rid of dirty coal. His records show that there are 9,000 deaths on an annual basis from coal-fired plants. We've talked about that since 2003 and we're getting very close. I believe that we're at about 40% or 50% reduction in coal-fired plants in this province already, and we'll have no more coal in 2014.

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These turbines are helping to replace electricity currently produced by burning coal. "The impact of Ontario's coal closure plan will reduce Ontario's carbon dioxide emissions by up to 30 megatonnes" and all those other emissions that affect health that also go with it. We know that there are serious and direct impacts on human health from burning coal. That's why wind energy is being promoted so much by our province.

I have to leave sufficient time for the other member to speak to it, but I would just like to again thank the member for bringing this forward. It's an important motion and it's important that this has the opportunity to be before us today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I am pleased to speak and support the resolution today. Although I don't have any wind farms proposed in my riding, I am supporting Ontarians who have had democracy pulled out from under them and also from under their local municipalities. Much like myself, I'm certain that Premier McGuinty, his Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and his caucus colleagues are hearing from thousands of Ontarians with respect to their very serious concerns about the unstudied adverse health effects of wind turbines. They're hearing from you, but they're not listening and they're certainly not acting. They are in their thinking place.

Regardless of these concerns, this government is continuing to go down the road of approval for construction of future wind farm projects without taking into consideration the concerns you've raised.

I cannot argue the importance of renewable energy, but without proper, conclusive scientific studies, I cannot speak to the placement of these wind turbines.

I am sure that the Premier and his Minister of Energy and Infrastructure are aware of the many reports that have looked at the potential adverse effects of wind turbines. Experts like Dr. Robert McMurtry, the former dean of medicine at the University of Western Ontario, say that more than 100 people informally surveyed and others around the world living close to turbines have complained about similar symptoms: sleep deprivation, cardiac arrhythmia, nausea, heart palpitations and severe headaches, to name a few. Dr. Harrison, professor emeritus in physics at Queen's University, says, "Wind turbine noise

causes annoyance and health problems. These problems include sleeplessness; anxiety; headaches and migraines; depression; and an accentuation of learning disabilities." If the Premier and his minister are not going to listen to the recommendations and warnings in the various reports that have been completed, then my question is, what studies have they done that look into the potential health effects of industrial wind turbines? What is the government doing to address the concerns of Ontarians? What studies have they done and where are these studies?

I think we all know the answer is that the McGuinty Liberals have not done any studies, despite the fact that they said they would. Back in May of this year, this government said that they would establish an academic research chair to examine potential public health effects of renewable energy projects. But to this date, we've heard that Minister Gerretsen says that his government is still "looking for the right university" for this position. That was in September. Now it's almost November, and the wind projects continue to be approved and constructed.

Ontario has a long list of great universities that excel in academic excellence. The Premier and his minister should just choose one and move on with this immediately. Perhaps the delay is caused by the fact that the Premier and his minister are more familiar with having their work done by Liberal friends, as we saw in the eHealth scandal, friends who will give them the conclusion they want. Nonetheless, they need to take action and they need to take it today. Ontarians are looking for answers now, and this government has an obligation to provide them these answers before continuing to approve more wind turbine projects without understanding the adverse health effects.
The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to support this important resolution brought forward by my colleague the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I want to make it clear that I support green energy. Being involved in agriculture, I know how important is the relationship that we have with our land and how we depend on it. But as we move forward, we need to make smart decisions about our environment and our hydro system. We cannot just blindly support everything that's labelled green. This resolution is not against, or for, wind turbines; it's simply saying that we can't proceed without doing the proper scientific research to ensure that the health of Ontarians is protected.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with a number of citizens from Oxford who are concerned about wind turbines and their impact on the health of nearby residents. I want to thank this group for the work they have done to ensure that my colleagues and I are fully briefed on the issue-and a great number of them are in the gallery today. I don't have the time to go into all the research that they've provided, but it is clear that there are a number of serious issues about turbines that need to be answered fully and scientifically before we move forward with any more projects.

There are three different proposals of wind turbine developments in Oxford. With three different developers, the one thing that is consistent is that residents are worried about the

impact of turbines on their health, and they are not getting satisfactory answers from the provincial government. In fact, hundreds of my constituents signed petitions supporting the idea of a moratorium on building turbines until their concerns are addressed. And I hope in the coming weeks to present those petitions to the Legislature.

All those people and the people in the gallery today have valid concerns. I know that all the members of this Legislature have received e-mails from families who live near wind turbines, and they have told us about the health problems that are driving them from their homes.

Through regulation, the minister has established a setback of 550 metres. Ontarians don't know if this is correct, nor do I. We are not scientists, and we haven't done the in-depth research to know what distance is safe. Perhaps the people can live closer to turbines. Maybe people shouldn't be living within a kilometre or two of the turbines. We just don't know.

Unless the government has done a full study to this issue that they aren't sharing with us, I don't think they know either. Doesn't it make sense to answer those questions before you build more turbines and before we allow companies to invest money in planning and developing these projects?

If we don't determine the health impacts and establish proper scientific setbacks, what do we do when we find out that 550 metres is too close? Does the government pay to move families that are suffering? Do we compensate the companies for building turbines they can't operate? Do we force the company to take the loss and go back and send the message that Ontario is not a good place to invest? We owe it to Ontarians, especially the people who live near turbines, to ensure that they have done the proper research-

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you.

We're almost done, people in the gallery, so you'll want to stick around for the vote.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Before I make my own comments, I was asked by my colleague from Huron-Bruce to read a statement into the record for her:

"I will not be supporting this resolution by the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

"During the public hearings for the Green Energy Act, no science-based evidence was brought forward to suggest that wind turbine developments were causing adverse health effects. It has been further confirmed by the chief medical officer of health that, based on all scientific evidence gathered to date, there exists nothing that would demonstrate a casual association between wind turbine noise and adverse health effects.

"Several of my constituents have concerns regarding their specific properties. To that end, I have made a written request to the Minister of the Environment to make certain that their outstanding concerns are addressed as a top priority of the academic research chair."

I myself have, over time, as a member, but also just as a farmer, watched and read and listened to a variety of research documents and many discussion papers, and I've even had the opportunity to get papers from the Netherlands to see what they are doing there because, of course, they have had wind turbines far longer than we have here.

The one thing I've noticed over and over again is that there's not only a large volume of research, documentation and anecdotal information, but a lot of it conflicts and a lot of it doesn't always agree. I'm reminded of the fact that when I first brought forward the stray voltage bill, having good scientific data and research was really important and really critical in terms of a statement of opinion. We needed to be able to prove that something existed before we could approach the remediation of that issue.

So I find that it was very important to have that kind of research done, and I was really pleased when the Minister of the Environment said that he was going to establish a research chair. As some have pointed out-they're saying, "Well, what happened to the research chair?" Actually, I have here a press release from the Council of Ontario Universities, in which they say, "The Council of Ontario Universities today announced that it will launch a competitive process on behalf of the Ontario government for one chair in renewable energy technologies and health and two chairs in green chemistry and engineering." We are moving forward with this, and when someone said, "Well, is it going to be picked by the minister or by the Premier?"-I think having this work done by the Council of Ontario Universities and having it tendered is much more appropriate. So we are moving forward in that direction.

I have had in my riding a number of proposals for wind turbines. I also have existing wind turbine farms. There have been public meetings in my communities. There was one very recently in Adelaide Metcalfe. I was unable to attend because it was a Tuesday night and we were here in Toronto, but my staff was there and they came back and they heard from people and heard their concerns.

I want to say thank you to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound because I do think we need to debate this. I think that we-

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Thank you.

Mr. Murdoch, you have up to two minutes for your response.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I want to thank the three Liberal members from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Ottawa-Orléans and Oak Ridges-Markham, and just say that all I can do is go by what was quoted by the chief medical officer. I know they keep saying that she wrote a letter that she didn't think there were any concerns, but yesterday when she was asked-and I'm just quoting from this: "So at the moment you don't have a formal position?" And her response was, "No"-well, no means no. You guys got that now? That's what I understood: no means no-"we're still reviewing...." So it means that she doesn't have a position; at least that's what I would take from "no." I think that our medical officer doesn't have a position at this time. That's why I'm saying that we need to put a moratorium on this because, do we have the right here to make people sick because of something we do?

The Toronto-Danforth member, Peter-I appreciate the kind words and that; he's a great politician and he works hard, but in Toronto you've got one windmill-one of them. One. So what do you give a damn about it? You don't. You've got one bloody windmill. We've got them all in rural Ontario. That's what we're upset about. They're all in rural Ontario. They're not down here in Toronto, so it's easy for him to say-and I agree with all he said about how we need to have better sources of electricity and things like that. All of that was nice, nice and green and nice to say, but he's from Toronto-one bloody windmill down here. It's all he's got. I mean, what are we doing here, folks?
I want to thank the three members who spoke on my behalf from the party. I've got to mention John Yakabuski-you're just lucky he wasn't here; John wanted me to mention that he worked really hard on this thing too.

So folks, one-remember that; there's only one of those things down here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll vote on Mr. Murdoch's item after we vote on the two previous items that are before us this afternoon.
The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

WIND TURBINES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item 42, standing in the name of Mr. Murdoch.

Mr. Murdoch has moved private member's notice of motion 116. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

WIND TURBINES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with-

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. Could you be a little bit quiet so the Clerk can count? It's pretty hard, I'm sure, and distracting for them.

We'll now deal with ballot item number 42, standing in the name of Mr. Murdoch.

Mr. Murdoch has moved private member's notice of motion 116. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Barrett, Toby
Dunlop, Garfield Hardeman, Ernie
Murdoch, Bill Savoline, Joyce

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Aggelonitis, Sophia
Albanese, Laura
Arthurs, Wayne
Balkissoon, Bas
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Michael A.
Colle, Mike
Dhillon, Vic Dickson, Joe
Hoskins, Eric
Jaczek, Helena
Kwinter, Monte
Mangat, Amrit
McNeely, Phil
Moridi, Reza
Pendergast, Leeanna
Phillips, Gerry Rinaldi, Lou
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Smith, Monique
Sousa, Charles
Van Bommel, Maria
Wilkinson, John
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 5; the nays are 27.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.