

## Media Release

### **Farmers for Economic Opportunity Applaud Green Energy Act**

(Simcoe, ON., Feb. 25, 2009) The group, Farmers for Economic Opportunity welcomes the Green Energy Act introduced in the Ontario Legislature. The government is commended for recognizing that for renewable energy to succeed, the power grid needs to be “a two way street”.

“As in other countries, such as Germany or Spain where renewable energy has experienced rapid growth, we in Ontario must ensure that smaller, diversified and geographically diverse, community and agricultural based projects be allowed priority access to the electricity grid,” said Jon Lechowicz, a FEO Director.

Under the provisions of the proposed bill, producers of renewable energy would have the “right” to connect to the electricity grid as long as economic and technical regulations are met. These regulations have still to be spelled out, and the Farmers for Economic Opportunity await their announcement to ensure that they are not so cumbersome and costly as they currently are.

“We need specifics especially when it comes to covering the costs,” said Lechowicz.

While not explicit, Lechowicz welcomes provisions in the Green Energy Act that allow the energy minister to issue directives to the energy board requiring it to take specific step to enable green energy producers to connect to the grid. Moreover, ministerial directives may require amendments to the licenses of distributors and transmitters in order for them to enhance, reinforce or expand their transmission systems to accommodate renewable energy.

The government is set to spend about \$5 billion over the next three years to upgrade transmission and distribution lines so that more renewable-energy projects can connect.

“Some of this money must be spent to upgrade lines in rural areas. This is where renewable energy is going to be produced whether on the farm or by windmills on the highlands. It is essential that the current grid system in these rural areas be upgraded so they can transmit the new renewable energy,” said Lechowicz.

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For more information, call Jon Lechowicz, C.E.O 519-770-5013

*Farmers for Economic Opportunity (FEO) is a self-governing, grassroots organization made up of local area farmers who are committed to family farms and rural communities in southwestern Ontario. Their mission is to strengthen Ontario's agricultural economy through rural-based and community driven, renewable energy production. FEO is a member of the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association, a founder of the Green Energy Act Alliance, which has been campaigning for a Green Energy Act*