

## **Op-Ed: Time for Ontario to seize far-offshore wind opportunities in the Great Lakes**

Over three and a half years ago, a cancellation, publicly referred to as a moratorium, on offshore wind was announced. The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) is perplexed by the lack of action in advancing a far-offshore wind sector in Ontario. The original February 2011 decision was made ostensibly to allow time to conduct more studies. Almost nothing has happened since this announcement. Ontario should be applauded for eliminating coal generation in a timely manner, however, we need to keep the momentum by meaningfully increasing renewable energy generation.

In the last two weeks the government issued its first two request for proposals (RFPs) related to offshore wind: one for studies related to the decommissioning of offshore wind generating sites (which, at present, do not exist); and the second to study the effect of noise from any offshore wind generation sites.

Ontario continues to send confusing signals as it tries to find the right balance of a steady, stable supply of energy at a reasonable cost to consumers. The Province is ignoring a huge opportunity to develop a proven source of reliable energy—far-offshore wind.

When dealing with wind energy it is important to correctly differentiate between onshore, near-shore, offshore and far-offshore.

Far-offshore wind is different. The dynamics of wind over water means that far-offshore wind is capable of providing reliable power throughout the day, including when electricity demand is highest. Moreover, if properly positioned, the sites remain out of sight from the mainland shore.

Polling undertaken by Oraclepoll Research in August 2014 shows that a clear majority of Ontarians are supportive of developing far-offshore wind (at least 15km from shore) in The Great Lakes. Over half support, less than a third oppose and 19% have no opinion. Support is consistent across men and women, all regions and all income groups in Ontario.

CAPE supports an increasing mix of renewable energy—including wind, solar and geothermal—to power Ontario. Producing wind energy at unique sites that cannot be seen from land responds to resistance from those possibly offended by the visual esthetic of turbines and potential concerns over property values.

Ontario does have viable shallow water far-offshore sites with completed site studies that are ready to go. These offshore projects have the ability to generate a minimum of \$10 Billion of private sector investment and economic opportunity that will have a direct and positive impact on communities such as Kingston, Belleville, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Windsor.

We continue to see progress related to offshore wind generation on The Great Lakes coming from the U.S. It would be a shame to let that technology-driven leadership opportunity pass Ontarians by.

Let's get behind this unique renewable resource in Ontario and keep the resulting high quality jobs and economic stimulus in the province, while ensuring a guaranteed source of healthy, low-carbon energy.

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