

**A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY
LEGISLATORS MILLS & DIXON**

Re: Opposition to Construction of Wind Turbine Farm on Lake Erie

WHEREAS, recently the state of Ohio has partnered with private business to construct wind turbines along the shore of Lake Erie with the approval of the federal government. This has spawned the discussion in Erie County's lake front communities over the impact of such development along our coast; and

WHEREAS, despite the ultimate decision to construct the wind farms resting with the federal government, representatives of the Town of Evans have met with a company looking to install turbines in Lake Erie. The discussion at that meeting was similar to one that generated significant opposition from local residents in 2010; and

WHEREAS, there are unquestioned benefits to the development of wind farms, including the production of clean energy, creation of an electrical grid that is less reliable on non-renewable resources, and increases in energy sources that are entirely domestic. There are, however, several issues that need to be resolved through extensive environmental impact studies and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, present military flight patterns out of the Niagara Falls Air Force Base need to be considered, and have, in the past been reason to oppose wind farms in our region. Studies have shown that the presence of wind farms can impact certain RADAR operations conducted by the U.S. Air Force. As a result, construction of wind farms on the shores of Lake Erie could impact the present or future operations coming out of the Niagara Falls Air Force base. This could thereby increase the likelihood of base closure in an era of military consolidations and put thousands of regional jobs in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that wind turbines inadvertently kill birds and bats especially those with large migratory ranges. The American shore of Lake Erie is an important stopping ground for many migratory birds, including Canada Geese and ducks, which are important migratory game birds that provide tangible economic value to local communities across New York and Canada. Smaller migratory birds, like the ruby-throated humming bird, migrate from southern Ontario across the Great Lakes and down to Central America. Even large birds of prey, like the America Bald Eagle, call the Great Lakes their home for a portion of the year; and

WHEREAS, the wide spread construction of wind farms not only pose a direct threat to individual animals, but may even alter migratory patterns taking them out of our region altogether. Such a tragedy would impose not just economic losses related to migratory hunting tourism but also decrease the regional biological diversity; and

WHEREAS, the wind farm development taking place in Lake Erie off the shore of Cleveland, Ohio, expects to place a significant number of turbines on the lake itself. Construction of wind turbines on the lake could negatively impact not just migratory birds but could also impact fishing waters through the destruction of spawning grounds, leaks of hydraulic fluids from the turbines themselves, and creating new physical barriers to fishing vessels; and

WHEREAS, Lake Erie currently supports the largest commercial fishery in the great lakes, with fish stocks including the American eel, blue pike, carp, lake sturgeon, lake trout, and lake whitefish. Our region has spent much of the latter half of the past century cleaning up local waters following the damage left behind from what are now all but abandoned factories. It would be foolish to rush back down a path that could potentially put such a valuable industry at risk; and

WHEREAS, many property owners consider wind turbines to be an eyesore at best. Waterfront housing is among the highest valued real estate in our region, which generates additional revenue for taxing municipalities and personal wealth for residents. When considering the location for new wind farms along the shores of Lake Erie, or even on the water in the lake, care needs to be taken to limit the impact on sightlines for property owners in the surrounding areas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, this Honorable Body is hereby opposed to the construction of any new wind turbines along the shores of Lake Erie and urges federal authorities to listen to local communities before the process moves any further; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that that this body urges the federal government and New York State, prior to any construction of wind farms along the shore of Lake Erie, conduct public review of the full environmental impact of the development, as well as engage in extensive debate with residents who live in and around any potential construction site; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be sent to the Western New York delegation to the U.S. Congress, the Western New York delegation to the New York State Senate and Assembly, and any other party deemed necessary and proper.

Fiscal Impact: None