

Results of Eastern Region Round Table - Infrastructure on the Oak Ridges Moraine

March 20, 2013 – **Save The Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition** (STORM) is a coalition of groups and concerned citizens that, since 1989, have been working to protect the ecological health of the Oak Ridges Moraine. Member groups were instrumental in lobbying the provincial government to show leadership for this significant headwaters landscape; in 2001, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act was passed by an all-party unanimous vote followed by the release, in 2002, of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP). In 2005 the province brought in the Greenbelt Act and Plan thus creating a 1.8 million acre protected landscape in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Greenbelt Plan knits together the three distinct regions of the Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment and Protected Countryside areas.

Citizens from City of Kawartha Lakes, Scugog, Clarington, Alnwick-Haldimand and the City of Peterborough met recently in a round table meeting hosted by STORM. The local citizens expressed concerns about the potential cumulative impact of so many large industrial-scale energy infrastructure projects on the groundwater, landscape and ecological values of the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Industrial wind towers, solar fields, and a massive Hydro One transformer station are the main infrastructure concerns at this time for communities east of York Region. Other groups, primarily in the west and central parts of the moraine, are worried about increasing pressure for road expansions connecting the 400 series highways. STORM and its member groups have spent decades dealing with growth associated with water and sewer pipes, highways, and a high pressure gas line for the peaker power plant in the Holland Marsh. Fred Jessop of Concerned Citizens of King Township remarked, “The open protected green space of the moraine is the location of least resistance and lowest land value so it appeals to the government and businesses as the most cost effective location for infrastructure projects. The 407 corridor was the first “greenbelt” around Toronto and look what it has become.”

Between Scugog, Kawartha Lakes, Clarington, Alnwick-Haldimand and Peterborough, there are seven proposed projects with approximately 50 industrial wind towers, one solar farm exceeding 100 acres, and a massive Hydro One transformer station in this eastern region of the moraine.

The Eastern Regional groups have developed a list of recommendations for the Province:

1. Support the designation of the Oak Ridges Moraine / Greenbelt area as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve
2. Declare a moratorium on all large scale energy infrastructure projects on the Oak Ridges Moraine
3. Strengthen the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act to ensure that the ORM is protected from industrial infrastructure
4. Strengthen enforcement of our current provincial laws
5. Increase public awareness of the ecological goods and services provided by the ORM
6. Educate the public of the health benefits provided by the ORM
7. Acknowledge the shared responsibilities of the Ministries, Conservation Authorities and the public
8. Recognize the integration and inter-connectivity of the entire ORM region
9. Examine the cumulative impact of all proposed infrastructure projects on the moraine
10. Protect the WATER

The Ontario government's vision for the Oak Ridges Moraine is that of "a continuous band of green rolling hills that provides form and structure to south-central Ontario, while protecting the ecological and hydrological features and functions that support the health and well-being of the region's residents and ecosystems".

At the same time that STORM supports the production of environmentally sustainable energy that reduces our reliance on fossil fuels, it also recognizes that all forms of power generation entail environmental trade-offs, and that there are drawbacks to alternatives including wind farms being sited on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

STORM shares the above-mentioned Ontario government's vision for the Oak Ridges Moraine and has been listening carefully to citizens on the moraine regarding the siting of large-scale energy infrastructure projects. In support of these communities and concerned citizens on the Oak Ridges Moraine *"We do not support the development of large scale industrial infrastructure projects on the Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment or the Protected Countryside Areas of the Greenbelt".*

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