COUNCIL OF LAKE COMMITTEES
POSITION STATEMENT
On

Wind Power Development in the Great Lakes

The Council of Lake Committees (CLC) recognizes that:

- provincial and state governments have the statutory authority to prioritize and pursue development of renewable power sources in their jurisdictional areas,

- provincial and state governments view wind power in the Great Lakes region as a reliable, sustainable, and clean source of renewable energy,

- using wind power in the Great Lakes as a source of electricity offers a natural opportunity to reduce the impact of climate change and the need to develop high capacity transmission lines in crowded urban centres, and to act as an economic stimulant to what is considered the fastest growing industry in the world, and

- there is virtually no information documenting short-term or long-term impacts to the freshwater aquatic ecosystem from wind power development,

Given the legitimate interests of the provincial and state governments to pursue wind power development in the Great Lakes in the face of uncertain impacts on valuable fisheries, the CLC urges governments to adopt an adaptive management approach, which includes direct and indirect effects on fish communities, aquatic habitats, and fisheries, for both short- and long-term durations, during their decision-making processes to place wind power structures in the Great Lakes basin.

The CLC specifically recommends that this approach include:

- Identification and protection of major fish spawning and rearing habitats and other biologically sensitive areas.

- Identification and protection of access and use of prime fishing areas for commercial, recreational and subsistence fisheries.

- Sufficient ecological monitoring, both pre- and post-construction, to determine the effects of specific wind energy installations on physical habitat, water chemistry and currents, algal and zooplankton communities, and fish communities in adjacent areas.

- Requirements and commitments of wind power developers to accommodate the need and costs for ecological monitoring into potential projects.

- Adaptive mitigation measures to address any adverse monitoring results, including necessary legislative tools and policies.

- Prior notice and consultation with all jurisdictions in a given lake on any substantial proposed in-lake wind power project within each jurisdiction to ensure consistency within each Great Lake, as envisioned through *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lake Fisheries.*

- Consideration of the effects of construction activities on fish and other aquatic organisms, including noise and vibration, re-suspension of contaminated substrates, and burying of benthic macroinvertebrate communities.

- Consideration of the economic impacts to sport, commercial, and subsistence fisheries.

- Consideration of the potential to create new habitats that will concentrate fish species and facilitate over-exploitation without enhancing natural reproduction.

- Consideration of the potential to create new habitats or otherwise promote invasive species colonization over native species in altered areas.

- Consideration of the potential for electromagnetic fields to affect fish behavior and incorporation of this issue in monitoring studies.

- Consideration of the cumulative impacts from wind power structures on the fish community, aquatic habitats, fisheries, and lake hydrodynamics in relation to the total number and location of structures in each Great Lake.

- Development of a decommissioning strategy.

- Consideration of integrated or uniform siting protocols among jurisdictions to the fullest extent possible.