

Making renewable energy viable

Dear Editor:

Timiskaming First Nation (TFN) was pleased to hear from so many of our neighbours about the Silver Centre Wind Power project at the open house on July 15. TFN has partnered with wpd Canada in the application for the wind power project that is located on our traditional territory.

As many of you know, TFN takes our responsibility for environmental stewardship in the region very seriously. We spent many years working with our neighbours to defeat the Adams Mine garbage proposal and the Bennett Incinerator project. We are also working on renewable energy projects that reflect this commitment to protect the environment, improve the quality of life in our community, and address our concern about climate change.

At the open house we heard many good questions from area residents. We are working hard

to answer all the questions that were raised. However, we were surprised that some people came to the meeting with clearly erroneous information.

We heard from various people that there will be between 200 and 400 turbines; the fact is that there will only be 30 to 40 turbines. We were also told at the open house that the MNRF had stated they would not respond to a fire call if a fire were to be caused by a wind turbine. TFN contacted the MNRF and they informed us that this is not accurate. They stated they would "deal with the fire in the areas of wind turbines no differently than we would any other structure or infrastructure."

Some of the people also stated they opposed wind power because they don't believe that climate change is a reality. The science is clear about the damaging impacts of man made greenhouse gases on the environment. We need to get

serious in Canada about finding alternatives to greenhouse gas emissions which is why David Suzuki and other environmental leaders support wind and solar power.

TFN is aware that there are impacts with any development. For those who expressed concerns over bird, bat and wildlife populations, TFN will have our own environmental monitors, as well as outside experts, to help us with mitigation efforts to ensure the greatest protection possible should the project proceed.

Many good issues were raised during the open house. We hope to work with our neighbours to explore ways to make renewable energy as viable and safe as possible in order to help combat the devastation of climate change.

Yours respectfully,
Chief Terence McBride
Timiskaming First Nation