

Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition

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Attention News/Assignment Editors:

MEDIA ALERT:

WIND IS A RENEWABLE RESOURCE... OUR NIAGARA ESCARPMENT LANDSCAPE ISN'T

Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition Launches Website: www.bhcc.ca

Feversham, Ontario: May 7, 2004

Following up on twelve months of research, the Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition has launched its new and re-designed website, effective May 7, 2004. The website can be found at www.bhcc.ca.

“We’re really pleased to be able to make the website available to the public” said Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition president Peter MacGowan. “We see our website as a key component of our community service mandate. We have done a lot of research on the issue of wind power development in our community, and we’re very pleased with the results of our efforts to put as much relevant information as possible into one place, where hopefully many residents of our community can access it. We also expect that our municipal and county councillors and planners, as well as the Niagara Escarpment Commission, will find it a useful source of pertinent information.”

The efforts of the Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition in putting the website together have been immense, said MacGowan. “The developer is controlled by Brascan Corporation, a Toronto-based conglomerate. Brascan is a big organization. But we’re proud of what a concerned local residents’ organization has been able to accomplish through volunteer effort and with a focus on making sure that the issue regarding wind power development on top of Blue Mountain is dealt with by our municipal and county politicians, by the Niagara Escarpment Commission, by our provincial politicians and, most importantly, by the residents of our community based on an informed, responsible decision-making process. That’s what we’ve

been calling for since May of 2003, when the Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition was first formed. And we're going to keep pushing for it".

As is clear from the website, the Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition supports responsible wind energy development. As is also clear from the website, though, any such development needs to be done in a way that will result in net benefits to the community, rather than net costs. Protection for the Niagara Escarpment landscape and the community's character and unique scenic resources are also important considerations.

"Community-based development - that's the model which we think needs to be pursued" said MacGowan. "Community-based development will lead to a number of things. First, we'll get the right scale and scope of development. Second, we'll get the right specific locations for development. And third, we'll be exploiting the community wind resource to the maximum benefit of the community. We don't think that our first and only choice should be to simply "sell" our wind resources to the first developer to show up – especially when 98% of project revenue will go the developer, rather than to the community. That's not a scenario that makes any sense to us".

Apart from dealing with specific issues of local concern, the website provides the community's residents with a centralized source of information regarding many of the issues which make the issue of wind power development so controversial when it is proposed for inappropriate locations. Other, even more fundamental, issues are also dealt with – including a study by the Royal Academy of Engineering in England, indicating that the cost of wind power is twice that of more traditional power sources.

The website also specifies the e-mail address through which viewers can ask to be put on to the Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition mailing list, express interest in getting involved with a community-based wind power development working group, provide comments and sign a petition in opposition to the proposed Brascan/Superior Wind Energy Inc. "Blue Highlands" wind power generation facility, one of the largest wind power projects in North America. "We're looking for input from, and involvement by, the community" said MacGowan. "We want to do what's best for the community, and getting feedback directly from the community through the "Contact Us" page on our website is particularly useful".

The website launch is timely, MacGowan said, in light of the Ontario Ministry of Energy's release on April 28, 2004 of its 300 MW Renewables RFQ, which sets out the financial and technical considerations which the Ministry of Energy is proposing to use as criteria for the selection of renewable energy projects which will be awarded long-term energy supply contracts

with the Province. As MacGowan noted, “So long as the right selection criteria are properly identified and considered by the Provincial Government, responsible projects are going to get the support they need and deserve. That’s going to be good for the development of the renewable energy industry in Ontario. It’s also going to assist in avoiding unnecessary controversy associated with inappropriate development proposals.”

MacGowan expressed some concern regarding the vague local planning and development selection criteria which have been identified to date in the Government’s 300 MW Renewables RFQ. “We commend the Provincial Government for its initiative in pursuing a renewable energy strategy” said MacGowan. “However, we’re very concerned that the selection criteria which have been specified by the Ministry of Energy to date aren’t nearly clear enough in terms of ensuring that due and proper regard is given to the real and substantial local community planning and development issues which arise in the context of something like a major wind power generation facility. We trust that our website content will make a positive and valued contribution to the process by which those issues are identified and properly addressed in a responsible and informed manner.”

“Renewable energy development, including wind power development, is a great concept. But like anything else there’s a right way and a wrong way to do it. Let’s make sure that we do it the right way”.

For those local residents and other interested citizens who don’t have Internet access but who want to contact the Blue Highlands Citizens Coalition, the Coalition’s phone number is 705-446-1798. The Coalition’s mailing address is P.O. Box 200, General Delivery, Feversham, ON N0C 1C0.