

Bluffs 'only option' for wind farm

RENÉ JOHNSTON/TORONTO STAR

A wind turbine beside the Pickering nuclear station, seen from about two kilometres away west of the plant, gives an idea of how proposed 98-metre-tall offshore turbines based in the lake would look from the Scarborough Bluffs. This photo was taken with a lens that simulates normal vision.

WIND POWER ON THE LAKE

60

Number of turbines proposed

98

Approximate height in metres of a turbine

25

Length in kilometres of stretch of reef that could host turbines

2 to 4

Distance in kilometres turbines would be from shoreline

1.5 - 2

Megawatts of emissions-free power each turbine could produce

100 - 200

Megawatts of total power wind farm could produce

50,000

Number of homes that could be powered by wind farm

Toronto Hydro says no other offshore sites in GTA are financially feasible locales for turbine project

October 29, 2008

Iain Marlow

STAFF REPORTER

The proposed site of a wind farm off the Scarborough Bluffs in Lake Ontario is the only place in the GTA where wind power might be feasible, Toronto Hydro said yesterday.

"Within the City of Toronto borders, it is pretty much the only option," said Joan McLean, spokesperson for the project.

Noting they had already investigated the west end, McLean added: "The reality is that the construction of offshore wind turbines is not financially feasible (in) over 20 meters of water depth," which excludes much of the GTA's shoreline.

Toronto Hydro Energy Services has proposed placing up to 60 massive turbines on a swath of shallow reef from Ajax to the Leslie Spit. The project has prompted intense interest from locals concerned about its impact on the view, the shore, and residents. Some 400 people showed up to an information session Monday - twice as many as could fit in the hall. It was postponed and will be rescheduled.

"The noise concerns me," said resident Jeanne Gagné. "This would be one of the first to be so close to a residential area. Everybody is pointing at us as being not-in-my-backyard. ... But it's more: Is this the best backyard?" she added.

The meeting was to discuss installing an anemometer - which measures wind speed and direction - offshore to collect data for a year.

"We're going to find wind, for sure," McLean said, noting the question was whether it would prove the plan financially justified.

Large turbines already stand at Exhibition Place and in Pickering. Oakville Hydro experimented with placing one in a park but, as with the others, inconsistent onshore winds led to inconsistent results.

Toronto's move is part of a broader effort to harness wind energy from the Great Lakes, McLean said, adding Cleveland already has an anemometer in Lake Erie. Projects elsewhere, for instance off Denmark, have been highly successful.

Peg Graham, who lives near the bluffs, said there was a lot of misinformation being spread, citing a pamphlet that claimed turbines in the lake would lower local property values. "I think it's a great idea," she said. "We have to do something other than nuclear power."