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The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier -Designate
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Open Letter re Safe Setback Amendment to GEA

Dear Premier-Designate Wynne:

Congratulations on your election to office as Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, and our new Premier-Designate.

We ask you now to consider acting on an issue of critical importance to Ontario's rural and small urban communities, and the environment. We believe it is well past the time to amend the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act (GEA)* to protect the health and safety of Ontario citizens and wildlife.

To be specific, this amendment should stipulate that until scientifically-determined setbacks are established, Industrial Wind Turbines must be no closer than 10km from internationally-recognized Important Bird Areas (IBAs), and no closer than 2km from present or future residential home sites. These interim "Safe Setback" amendments would remain in effect until scientifically-determined safe setback distances are decided by independent organizations such as Nature Canada and Health Canada.

CCSAGE strives to promote "Safe and Appropriate Green Energy", but many Ontario wind energy projects are neither safe nor appropriate. These include the recently-approved nine-turbine project on Crown Land in the Important Bird Area or IBA at Ostrander Point in Prince Edward County.

At present, legislation permits turbine construction in places that are too close for safe habitation by either wildlife or people. Nature groups and rural residents are outraged that the GEA allows mammoth industrial turbines, which are known to produce environmental noise and vibration, to threaten millions of migrating and endangered wildlife, and to compromise the health of residents in the Ontario countryside.

Evidence is mounting: **action is needed urgently**. Recently, while the government approved the wind power generation project at Ostrander Point and the removal of a Bald Eagles' nest in Haldimand County, Ontarians were learning that international turbine kill rates for avian populations have been

much higher than previously believed. Increasingly, rural Ontarians are launching Environmental Review Tribunal appeals and lawsuits, to fight the sicknesses that unsafe turbines bring to their neighbourhoods.

In 2009, when the GEA was introduced, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) urged that “The Ministry of the Environment should complete an independent analysis of the impact of renewable energy facilities on the natural environment and human health.” This was never done.

In 2011, Ontario’s Auditor General was critical of your government, saying that a cost-benefit analysis of all the impacts of the renewable power policy was never undertaken. There is still no independent scientific analysis of the potential for negative impacts.

In 2012 the AMO president said “We are well aware that 75 municipalities are very concerned about wind-turbines.” The Ontario Environmental Commissioner, the Canadian Senate, Nature Canada, and Ontario Nature all insisted that Industrial Wind Turbines should **not** be constructed in Important Bird Areas such as Ostrander Point. And by undertaking a multi-million dollar study, Health Canada has acknowledged that industrial wind turbines may be hazardous to human health.

Wildlife needs protection. Ontarians need protection, and you are our Premier. It is now time for legislation. Please save the birds. Please save what is left of safe, residential rural Ontario. Please pass a “Safe Setback” Amendment to the Green Energy Act.

Yours sincerely,

Garth Manning, Q.C.

Chair