



**Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission**



**US and Canadian Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission
A Resolution to Protect Fish Habitat and Guide Wind Turbine Siting in the Great Lakes**

Whereas aquatic bottomlands of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River provide critically important habitat to fish and other aquatic organisms, and

Whereas according to the State of the Lake Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC), 134 of the 139 species of Great Lakes fish use the near shore waters for one or more critical life stages or functions. Coastal margin and near shore areas also have diverse wetland, benthic, and planktonic communities that comprise the lower portion of food web, and

Whereas all Great Lakes bottomlands are held in public trust, and

Whereas the U.S. and Canadian federal, provincial, and state agencies, energy companies, and other businesses are becoming increasingly interested in developing Great Lakes nearshore and offshore wind energy projects, and

Whereas the science of assessing impacts of in-lake structures such as wind turbines requires a combination of predictive methods and reversible pilot projects, and

Whereas the Council of Lake Committees has articulated a serious concern with “virtually no information documenting the short-term and long-term impacts to freshwater ecosystems from wind power development”, and makes specific recommendations to protect the Great Lakes fisheries if wind power development occurs in the Great Lakes.

Therefore be it resolved, as a result of the lack of documentation regarding the impacts to the Great Lakes, the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission demand a full and adequate environmental assessment on a wind turbine pilot project before the placement of any commercial wind turbines in the lakes, and

Therefore be it further resolved that the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission demand a full and adequate environmental assessment (that includes but is not limited to, the impact on fish populations, fish habitat, the Great Lakes fisheries, fishing access, and fishing experience) and environmental review with full public engagement in the consideration of each wind development proposal within the Great Lakes, and

The Committee of Advisors consists of both U.S. and Canadian representatives, from First Nation, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, and public fishery interests in the Great Lakes Basin. Advisors provide advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; U.S. advisors are nominated by the State Governors, and appointed by the commission. Canadian advisors are nominated by the Ontario Minister of Natural Resources and appointed by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Therefore be it further resolved that the advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission endorse the specific recommendations articulated by the Council of Lake Committees (attached statement by CLC), and,

Therefore be it further resolved that the advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission strongly recommends that compensation for any project within of Great Lakes nearshore or offshore should be specifically directed into a fund to be used for monitoring of Great Lakes fisheries impacts from turbines, research, habitat restoration and mitigation, and decommissioning of turbines, and

Therefore be it further resolved that the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission oppose the placement of wind turbines or any other project within the nearshore and offshore areas of the Great Lakes if they are at any time shown to have a deleterious impact on local and regional fish populations, fish habitat, the Great Lakes fisheries, and fishing access, and fishing experience, and

Therefore be it finally resolved that the advisors of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission call upon the Great Lakes Fishery Commission to adopt this resolution as their own position, and prioritize carrying these recommendations to all appropriate parties.

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.