

Sept. 19, 2018

## **Power Coalition briefs state lawmakers on opposition to Lighthouse Wind project**

Members of the POWER Coalition (Protecting {Lake} Ontario's Waterfront, Environment, and Resources) met in Batavia on Sept. 17, to brief Sen. Rob Ortt (R-North Tonawanda), and Paul Bologna, chief of staff to Assemblyman Mike Norris (R-Clarence), about their opposition to the Lighthouse Wind project, proposed for a 12-mile stretch along Lake Ontario in Somerset and Yates. Apex Clean energy has said the 600-foot tall industrial wind turbines would include 240-foot long blades.



"The meeting was requested by Senator Ortt who said the project is not going to be isolated. "The green energy goals set up by Gov. Cuomo will require significant construction of industrial wind turbines to meet the current and future demand. It's essential that local communities have input before these massive structures start popping up across Upstate and Western New York State – as is currently planned."

***Sen. Rob Ortt (right to left), Amy Kahn, president of the Rochester Birding Association, and Shawn Graff, vice president, Great Lakes Region, of the American Bird Conservancy, look at a scale diorama that depicts a 630-foot tall industrial wind turbine, with a 31-foot tall farmhouse.***

Ortt said all energy projects, including Lighthouse Wind, need to consider where it's being sited, local input and the threat to wildlife, all of which are real concerns.

POWER members said they are not opposed to renewable energy, but they are against the siting of this particular project, especially along a major bird migratory flyway.

Coalition member Brian Dugan of the New York State Ornithological Association, said concerns include siting of the industrial wind turbines along a major bird migratory route, access roads to turbines resulting in bird habitat fragmentation and the noise that will result from operation of the turbines.

Discussion also centered on a recent Apex mailer to local residents, which downplayed the number of birds that are killed by industrial wind turbines, claiming it is only a fraction of deaths compared to the number caused by other activities.

“They grossly underestimate the number of birds that are killed by wind turbines,” said Shawn Graff, vice president, Great Lakes Region, of the American Bird Conservancy, another POWER member. “The study deals only with song birds, not other birds such as raptors and water fowl, water birds and gamebirds. Some of the study data cited are as old as 2000 and are woefully out of date.”

The project is also expected to have a significantly negative impact on hunting and local tourism.

“We are grateful for the support of elected officials at every level,” said Pam Atwater, president of Save Ontario Shores and POWER member. “They are very engaged with this important issue. They have provided us with invaluable guidance, advocacy and encouragement as we continue our relentless effort to stop Apex from going ahead with this ill-conceived project.”

*POWER Coalition members include:*

- American Bird Conservancy
- Braddock Bay Bird Observatory
- Burroughs Audubon Nature Club
- Federation of Monroe County Environmentalists
- Genesee Valley Audubon Society
- Great Lakes Seaway Trail
- Hawk Migration Association of North America
- New York State Ornithological Association
- Niagara USA Chamber
- Orleans County Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs
- Rochester Birding Association
- Save Ontario Shores, Inc.