

POWER Coalition unites to block Lighthouse Wind project

A diverse group of organizations has joined forces to stop Apex Clean Energy's Lighthouse Wind project, which has been proposed for the towns of Somerset and Yates in Niagara and Orleans counties.

The mission of the POWER Coalition (Protecting {Lake} Ontario's Waterfront, Environment, and Resources) is to highlight the broad opposition to the current proposal by Apex to site up to seventy approximately 600-foot-tall industrial wind turbines along the Lake Ontario shoreline.

Each member organization opposes this project based on one or more of the following concerns:

- That this project is being proposed in a major bird migratory corridor and will be devastating to large populations of birds and bats
- Will visually degrade the waterfront, negatively impact tourism, and violate the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans (LWRP) adopted by the towns of Somerset and Yates and accepted by New York State
- Disrupt hunting and fishing opportunities
- Increase noise levels for local and seasonal residents
- Possibly interfere with operations at the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, potentially jeopardizing the future of the base in the next round of base closures

It is the position of all POWER Coalition members that renewable energy is a legitimate and important goal for New York State to pursue. But no energy project should ever be free of assessing and balancing **ALL** its impacts on other vital aspects of our environment, economy and quality of life.

The POWER Coalition acknowledges the importance of standards for the proper siting of these projects based on eliminating or significantly mitigating the negative aspects any project might present. The POWER Coalition believes that the Apex proposal for Somerset and Yates fails to meet these standards and should be rejected by New York State.

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
- Onondaga Audubon Society
- Orleans County Federation of Sportsmen’s Clubs
- Rochester Birding Association
- Save Ontario Shores, Inc.

“We are in favor of renewable energy, but the Lighthouse Wind project does not meet our standards,” said Shawn Graff, vice president, Great Lakes Region, American Bird Conservancy. “The American Bird Conservancy believes that the proximity to the lakeshore makes this project toxic for migrating birds, bats and raptors and this alone should be enough to stop the project. There are several environmental organizations who agree.

“The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has produced a report based on its 2013 study in the project area and other studies near the Great Lakes that call for a setback from the shore of the Great Lakes to protect migrating birds. Additionally, there are POWER members that see other issues, including harm to the local and regional economy from habitat fragmentation that could impact hunting and fishing, visual and noise impacts that can discourage tourism, and the loss of quiet nights, dark skies and the scenic nature of this lakefront region that are important to the health and well-being of both birds and humans. Industrial wind projects need to be carefully sited. This project is not. We are calling on Apex to withdraw their proposal.”

The POWER Coalition will continue to advocate for the withdrawal of this project through direct advocacy with government officials, by hosting forums, and disseminating information which will show the tremendous negative impact this industrial wind project will have on Niagara and Orleans counties’ lakeshore regions.

