



NEWS RELEASE

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## **Amherst Island Wind Project Decision should be overturned**

Owls and eagles, swallows and bats will soon run a deadly gauntlet of wind turbines along eastern Lake Ontario if the Amherst Island, White Pines and Ostrander projects go ahead as proposed say Nature Canada, Ontario Nature, the Kingston Field Naturalists, and American Bird Conservancy.

“Ontario’s decision last week to approve Windlectric’s 26-turbine project on Amherst Island—one of the province’s crown jewels of nature—is another in a string of ‘tough on nature’ decisions to build wind energy projects in Important Bird Areas in the region” said Stephen Hazell, Nature Canada’s Director of Conservation. “Given Ontario’s failure to consider the cumulative effects of these projects on nature, the Environmental Review Tribunal should overturn the approval of the Amherst Island Project as well as that of White Pines. And given the clear breaches of the federal *Migratory Birds Convention Act*, the federal government should in future apply its environmental assessment process to wind energy projects.”

“We fear that that the construction of 35 kilometres of roads on Amherst Island will destroy habitat for species at risk like the Blanding’s Turtle,” said Joshua Wise, Ontario Nature’s Greenway Program Manager. “Amherst has the largest breeding population of the at-risk Short-eared Owl in southern Ontario. During the winter, Amherst supports the largest concentration of owl species of anywhere in eastern North America as far as we know. . We are all for green energy, but not at the expense of nature.”

“We cannot ignore this decision” said Michael Hutchins, Director of the American Bird Conservancy’s Bird-Smart Wind Energy Campaign. “The birds and bats that will be killed would be migrating to or from the United States and are a shared resource. They contribute millions of dollars of tourism revenue and ecological services to the U.S., Canada and other countries that may be their winter destinations. There is no regard in this decision for its international implications. We will take a very close look at the spectrum of tools that are available to oppose and overturn this very bad decision.”

“The Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN) have been opposing the construction of an industrial wind facility on Amherst Island, in part because the number of birds killed per turbine on nearby Wolfe Island is one of the highest in North America. Ospreys, Red-tailed Hawks, Purple Martins and Wilson Snipe have experienced very high mortality rates. The KFN believe that there will be the same or higher levels of mortality on Amherst that will result in the local extinction of



these four species and have irreversible impacts on Eastern Meadowlarks and Bobolinks. Our requests for a radar study of bird and bat migration was ignored and the environmental impact of the project was grossly minimized in their EBR,” said Kurt Hennige president of the Kingston field Naturalists.

About:

Nature Canada is the oldest national nature organization in Canada with 45,000 members and supporters. Nature Canada’s mission is to protect and conserve Canada’s wildlife by working with people and advocating for nature. Nature Canada is Canadian co-partner of BirdLife International.

Ontario Nature protects wild species and wild spaces through conservation, education and public engagement. Ontario Nature is a charitable organization representing more than 30,000 members and supporters, and 150 member groups across Ontario.

Established in 1994, American Bird Conservancy is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit membership organization whose mission is to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC acts by safeguarding the rarest species, conserving and restoring habitats, and reducing threats, while building capacity in the bird conservation movement. ABC’s work has resulted in the establishment of 65 international bird reserves, with over 990,000 acres protected, and 3.5 million trees and shrubs planted to enhance bird habitat.

The Kingston Field Naturalists (KFN) is a well-established nature club and charitable organization with about 450 members. Its objectives are the preservation of wildlife, natural habitats and the stimulation of people's interest in nature.

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