

February 15, 2013

Ontario Energy Board,
Box 2319, 27th Floor,
2300 Yonge Street,
Attention: Board Secretary
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

Dear Ms. Walli:

RE: Varna Wind Inc. EB-2012-0442 Application for Leave to Construct

In reference to Procedural Order No. 1, we wish to submit the following comments and questions which we believe to be within the jurisdiction of the OEB, to be directed to Varna Wind Inc (NextEra).

To review, we have been granted intervenor status and are landowners on Lot 5 Conc. 2HRS, Lot S 5 Conc. 1HRS Tuckersmith whose farm property abuts the HONI Seaforth transformer station to the north. The proposed 115 KV transmission line would run to the immediate west of our house and barn. Our primary concern is the proximity of the line to our living quarters and housing of yearling calves and pregnant beef cattle.

The standard 10 metre easement agreement requested by Next Era encroaches into our "century farm" barn by .6 metre and is less than 3 metres from the front edge of our house, therefore, signing the easement agreement is not an option, because they cannot "own" a portion of our barn, nor would we allow poles and guy wires this close to our home for safety and aesthetic reasons. Our lawyer advised us against signing the easement agreement as presented. During the phase of bringing the easement contracts to landowners, which Next Era did through the land acquisition company "Canacre", we were visited by 4 different reps over an approximately 18 month period, with each rep urging us to sign the agreement. We repeatedly refused for the reasons listed above. We also indicated that bringing their transmission line through to this HONI station was an ill-conceived plan because common sense would suggest that the turbines be hooked into the HONI station that was located in the near vicinity of the BWEC. We were told that only the Seaforth station had the upgrades to accept that much power. We heard from neighbours that NextEra was trying to acquire as much land as possible in the form of easements along both sides of the Centennial, Hensall Road route to the Seaforth HONI station and were advised that a few landowners did sign up. We found it problematic that none of the reps could clearly confirm exactly where the transmission line, posts and guy wires would be located. We were not given an opportunity to speak directly to Next Era within the context of a meeting in one room together with all affected landowners. Receiving direct information and answers and the option to explore valid alternatives, before any easement agreements were signed, could have eliminated a lot of mistrust, misinformation, false witness and angry and frustrated residents. We attended 2 of the Next Era Open Houses in Seaforth and were not given helpful answers to our real questions or concerns. As well, in December we submitted questions to Huron-Bruce MPP Lisa Thompson, who in an email to us on January 9, 2013, indicated she would forward the questions to Varna Wind/Next Era, and request that they respond to us, yet to date, we have heard nothing from this company. We told the last visiting Canacre representative in December that we were not interested in signing the easement agreement for the reasons previously listed here and we have not been contacted by them since.

While Canacre on behalf of NextEra has indicated to us that the cost of burying the transmission line along the route is too expensive, the option of burying the wires specifically along the front of our property along the municipal road allowance seemed reasonable, but to our knowledge was never considered. Because NextEra was unable to negotiate with Hydro One to co-locate lines with HONIs existing infrastructure, which would have had merit and because our home and barn are uniquely situated in close proximity to the proposed transmission line, **we ask that Varna Wind Inc./NextEra:**

a) bury the 115kv transmission line along the municipal road allowance, in front of our property, across the

road on the west side where poles already exist , to avoid the high pressure Union Gas pipeline already buried underground (and to save our trees).

Further to this, because we are a cattle operation there are pasture fields using electric fencing parallel to the proposed transmission line route. According to various publicly available sources, electric fences located beneath high voltage lines are subject to induced voltage from transmission lines overhead which can cause shocks. This is a potential safety hazard (and possible liability) to humans and animals and relocating our pasture land fencing is not an option. Burying the lines could help eliminate this risk as well.

b) arrange for independent testing to be done for stray (tingle) voltage at no cost to us, both “pre” and “post” installation of the transmission line, whether buried or aerial, and that a solution be engineered to eliminate stray voltage should it appear to increase following installation of the line.

c) pay to have a new house and barn built on our property set back at a reasonable distance away from the transmission line, as suggested in our first submission to the OEB, if the lines cannot be buried and are placed overhead on poles on the east municipal road allowance along the front of our property.

Given the fact that the home and barn existed at this location, since the settling of the Huron Tract in the mid-nineteenth century by the Oldfield family, long before the reality of power grids, and that an overhead line will be potentially disruptive to our existence here, we feel our concerns are justified and deserve consideration. A photograph of our buildings is included to pictorially demonstrate our proximity to the road allowance.

In addition, as consumers from a public interest standpoint, we would appreciate answers from Varna Wind/Next Era to the following general questions about their overhead lines.

d) **In an emergency situation, how long would the wait time be for qualified service to correct safety hazards caused by downed wires from storms or accidents?** (Our area is familiar with exceptionally good service from Hydro One.)

e) **Further to previous question, would there be an emergency telephone number available to the public and will there be assurance in writing of timely emergency service and what recourse is there if respond times and quality of repair were not acceptable -who would we contact – Next Era, OEB?**

f) **How does Next Era monitor the safety of the line and who are they accountable to regarding records of regular maintenance?**

g) **Because Next Era easement agreements are “lifetime” with provision for the sale at any time, of all of their infrastructure (poles, lines and easement properties) how does the OEB ensure that a new company purchasing these assets, would be bound to the same terms or rules with respect to service, reliability and safety issues?**

We appreciate this opportunity to ask these questions and receive answers and respectfully submit this document as relevant to the OEB process.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

W. Brian Oldfield

Helen Oldfield

centuryacres@tcc.on.ca 519-522-1435

77660 Hensall Rd. R.R. 4

Seaforth, ON N0K 1W0

cc. nicole.geneau@nexteraenergy.com File: NextEra (1338-20) – Leave to Construct