



Municipality of the District of Argyle

Item: Letter of support for Wind turbine project – District 5

Date: March 4, 2022

## VISION

We see Argyle as home to a healthy and thriving rural population. Our municipality promotes and supports economic and social opportunities for the region and engages in the active expression of our unique Acadian heritage. We are a place of choice for rural living and are widely recognized for our warm hospitality and joie de vivre. Surrounded by fresh air and cool ocean breezes, we work and play in the great outdoors. People choose to live in Argyle because of our commitment to each other, to our community and to our neighbors. Argyle is a place we are proud to call home.

## **Background:**

We have received a request to provide a letter of support to a prospective wind turbine developer that intends to invest in District 5 as this is an ideal location, for them, to produce wind energy while being close to the utilities responsible to deliver the service to the grid.

We have been supplied with an example letter (attached) for your consideration. While the letter is in their business interest, our role is to consider our business interest, while considering political realities facing our residents.

## **History:**

We are, for some councilors and most staff, aware of the potential response to this sort of request. This request will certainly affect residents in the affected area, if not locally, then at least visually. We have experienced polarized responses to this sort of investment. Some fully support the renewable perspective of this investment and others more skeptical of their intentions, including but not limited to land use impacts, environmental impacts, end of life of the asset impacts and the list goes on.

Typically, these investments have had a positive change to renewable energy objectives. We are the home for the first wind turbine farm in NS, and brag our net-zero energy Administrative building where possible. It is clear that this Council has consistently supported renewable energy investments, despite understanding that the initial investment likely results in heavy carbon efforts to achieve our end.

Any wind investment is subject to existing legislation around turbine taxation. Each year the amount increases as per CPI. Turbines are taxed differently than equipment or buildings and have a pre-established taxation leg. There is no reason for us to deny their claim for increased revenues. Current wind turbine revenues are shy of \$300,000 annually, so their claim for a \$700,000 per annum revenue stream would benefit us, and all residents that would benefit from this increase. As is the case in many such investments, they identify local organizations that will directly benefit from an investment with increased grant revenues.

**Our role:**

Our role, from our perspective, is to support any application that meets our Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Planning Recommendations. These regulations have been informed by our community as we had a potential investment in Wedgeport. Their input was critical to our regulations we hold currently. In a less relevant note, we have received zero complaints from that community for the three turbines installed in or around the Comeau's Hill area. It is clear to all of us that before a final investment is contemplated, that public engagement is paramount. Conversely, hosting a public engagement conversation on an application is not appropriate. The firm has, as part of their investment, the need to show the Province that land owners are in agreement that the project can occur in that location, so the application has a public engagement component built in.

**MGA considerations:**

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A letter of support is within our powers in the MGA.

**CAO's Recommendation:**

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Despite any opinions around wind energy, our Land Use Bylaw defines our work. Should this project meet our requirements in land use, we are compelled to support a project that respects our pre-established rules. CAO recommendation is to support the project, should it meet our Land use requirements.

**Suggested motion:**

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Move that we draft a revised letter of support for this firm, ensuring that they, and the applicant, understand that the project meets our Land use regulations.

(It should be noted that if it doesn't, it will be rejected without Council endorsement, unless they request an amendment, which will come to Council).

Also, it should be noted that the letter, as amended, shall be emailed to Council prior to signoff to ensure majority approval.