Q&A – REA Submission

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Otter Creek Wind Farm?	• Otter Creek Wind Farm is a 50 MW wind farm project, located north of the community of Wallaceburg in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Ontario, which plans to include 12 wind turbines.
2. What stage is the project at?	• The Renewable Energy Approval (REA) application was submitted on March 8th. There will be a public comment period once the application has been deemed complete.
3. What is a REA?	• The REA is issued by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) under O. Reg. 359/09 (Renewable Energy Approvals under Part V.0.1 of the Act) under the Environmental Protection Act. The REA application (along with supporting reports) outlines how Otter Creek proposes to design, construct, operate and decommission the Project. • It is a process set out by the provincial government to help streamline the approval of renewable energy projects. • The process requires consultation with various stakeholders, such as the municipality, the First Nations, ministries and the public, in order to hear potential concerns and allow for input into the project. • The process consists of doing various studies and investigations in order to eliminate or mitigate impact on the environment (e.g. waterbodies), cultural heritage, and other socio-economic factors.

4. Will the project have an impact on water wells and water well quality?	Throughout the REA process, several stakeholder groups raised concerns about the construction and operation of wind turbines and their potential impacts on water wells. Many of the comments received related to the concern that aquifer-based well water quality would become compromised as a result of vibrations created by pile driving (into the bedrock) during the installation of wind turbine foundations, and/or operation of these turbines with piles. In response to these concerns, Otter Creek consulted with qualified professionals (licensed P.Eng. and P.Geo.) from both GHD and Golder Associates about the potential for pile foundations to have a negative impact on water wells. GHD was hired by Otter Creek to review the report Golder Associates prepared as part of the North Kent Wind 1 Project (the Golder Report, September 2016) to determine whether the conclusions of the report were valid and could apply to the Project. The main conclusions from GHD's review are: • "Based on the similarity of geologic conditions confirmed by GHD at the Otter Creek Site and those presented in the Golder Report, GHD believes that the Golder Report conclusions are applicable to the Otter Creek Site." • "The Report concludes, and GHD concurs, that given that the typical residential well pump operational vibration intensity threshold is in the range of 3 to 9 mm/s, it is highly unlikely (nearly impossible) that vibrations induced by pile driving can cause dislodgement of sediments that would not be otherwise dislodged by existing pump vibration." • "GHD is not aware of any report or study confirming a plausible mechanism for vibrations induced by wind turbine operations to cause sediment dislodgement at distances beyond the common turbine exclusion zones." Based on these conclusions, Otter Creek does not anticipate that either the construction or operation of the facilities will have any negative impact on water wells.
5. Will you do water quality testing?	• While Otter Creek relies upon the conclusions of qualified experts, it is also committed to being a good neighbour and to helping alleviate the public's concerns. As a result, Otter Creek is also voluntarily committing to testing active water wells within one kilometre of key project infrastructure – specifically wind turbines, the substation and the meteorological tower – prior to starting construction of the facility. • Tests will be conducted by independent qualified professionals in Ontario and the results of this testing will be given to each landowner that chooses to participate in the program

6. What happens if there is an effect on a well?	• Should any complaints arise during construction or within the first year of operation of the facility from parties that elected to participate in this preconstruction water well testing program, Otter Creek will retain an independent qualified professional to collect a water sample for analysis. Should this analysis confirm there is a water quality issue that was not present in the preconstruction sample, Otter Creek will provide the party with potable water while the complaint is being investigated by a qualified professional (P.Eng. or P.Geo) retained by Otter Creek to determine if the change can be reasonably attributed to Otter Creek.
7. During construction or after the commissioning, if I have any concerns about my water wells and I didn't participate in the preconstruction water wells testing, what will happen?	• Complaints arising during construction or within the first year of operation of the facility from parties within one kilometre of key project infrastructure that did not participate in preconstruction water well testing will be investigated, however these parties will not be eligible for potable water being provided by Otter Creek during the investigation period.