CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF HURON

Health Unit

TO:	Chair and Members of the Board of Health
FROM:	Jean-Guy Albert, Public Health Manager
DATE:	September 1, 2016
SUBJECT:	Proposed joint investigation to be conducted by Wind Concerns Ontario, University of Waterloo and Huron County Health Unit into wind turbines and reported associated human health effects

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Health agrees to the request made during its August 4, 2016 meeting for the Health Unit's participation in the proposed investigation into wind turbines and reported associated human health effects to be conducted in partnership with Wind Concerns Ontario and the University of Waterloo.

BACKGROUND

During its August 4, 2016 meeting the Board of Health directed staff to obtain additional information from Wind Concerns Ontario and University of Waterloo representatives related to the requested Health Unit participation in the proposed investigation; and further that findings be reported to members at a later Board of health meeting; and further that a report be presented to the Board of Health outlining the staff commitment and capacity for this project.

On August 15, 2016 Health Unit staff met with representatives from Wind Concerns Ontario and from the University of Waterloo to discuss the request made during the August 4, 2016 Board of Health meeting for the Health Unit's participation in the proposed joint investigation into wind turbines and reported associated human health effects.

The request is for Health Unit staff to process the enrolment of participants in the investigation, to collect data on an investigation questionnaire from the participants, and to assist the other investigating partners in the analysis of the data collected from the completed investigation questionnaires.

Given the nature and the scope of the proposed investigation, the above noted activities requested of the Health Unit fall within its public health mandate.

The enrolment process would consist of collecting information from people residing in the catchment areas wanting to participate in the investigation. People could either call the Health Unit or come in person and a staff member would assist them in completing the enrolment questionnaire. Various staff members could assist with this activity. It is anticipated that staff time required to complete the enrolment questionnaire would be minimal.

Data from the enrolled participants would be collected on an existing investigation questionnaire. The questionnaire would be posted on the Health Unit web site and would be completed directly by the participants. Staff time would only be required if a participant did not have access to the electronic questionnaire and requested assistance from staff in completing it. Various staff members could assist with this activity. It is anticipated that staff time required to provide assistance in completing the investigation questionnaire would be minimal.

Assistance with the analysis of the data collected from the investigation questionnaires would be provided by the Health Unit's epidemiologist. Given that this activity would be shared among the partners conducting the investigation, the work required from the epidemiologist would be manageable. There would be an agreement however that the other partners conducting the investigation would take on additional data analysis responsibilities if it became apparent that this activity could impact the epidemiologist's ability to fulfill her public health duties.

Health Unit staff have the capacity to complete the activities requested by Wind Concerns Ontario and the University of Waterloo as a partner in the proposed investigation without compromising the delivery of public health services.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

This report outlines the deployment of resources approved as part of the 2016 budget.

Original Signed By

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Nancy Rennick
Acting Senior Manager

Original Signed By

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Jean-Guy Albert
Public Health Manager