



Save The River® / Upper St. Lawrence RIVERKEEPER®

Protecting the St. Lawrence River through Advocacy, Education and Research

Position on Industrial Wind Development in the St. Lawrence River Valley

For almost four decades Save The River has worked to protect the St. Lawrence River from the negative impacts of ill-considered industrial activities. Notable examples are our decades-long fight against expansion of the shipping channel and ice breaking throughout the winter. Currently Save The River is leading the effort to implement a water levels plan that benefits the environment and not just shipping. And we are challenging plans to ship highly volatile and unrecoverable crude oil on the River.

Save The River's mission has always been to restore, preserve and protect the ecological integrity of the Upper St. Lawrence River through advocacy, education and research. Our vision for the St. Lawrence is a healthy river that provides safe drinking water, is home to a thriving range of indigenous species and supports sustainable economic activity. The mission and vision of Save The River is premised on a simple core value that the River is a commons to be nurtured and passed on undiminished for future generations to share.

Our programs and policies are based on science and research. Through science and research it has become clear that traditional methods of energy production have significant lasting, negative impacts on the River. Among them: mercury from coal-fired power plants now in the sediment of our River, its tributaries and in the fatty tissue of many fish species; carbon and methane-induced atmospheric warming contributing to extreme variability in seasonal ice cover, evaporation and storm events with difficult to predict impacts on water levels and populations of key fish and terrestrial species; and the challenge of what to do with tons of nuclear waste now stockpiled at aging reactors along the shores of the Great Lakes.

In light of the clear threats to the River from traditional methods of energy production, Save The River supports increased reliance on renewable energy sources and conservation measures. Appropriately sized and sited wind projects are a necessary part of a sustainable energy future. However, given the potential for significant negative impacts, we have consistently objected to the number and scale of industrial wind projects proposed for the St. Lawrence River valley.

In 2010 Save The River called for a moratorium on industrial wind projects until an environmental assessment of the impacts of such projects was conducted.¹ In 2013 we objected to an industrial wind project proceeding to the application phase of New York's Article X process for the same reason.² And today, as another potentially massive wind project is being proposed, the assessment Save The River has long called for has still not been proposed, much less undertaken.

Given the failure of our regulatory agencies to bring science and research to bear on the critical environmental questions raised by industrial scale wind projects, Save The River reiterates its position that no such projects be permitted in the St. Lawrence River valley until a comprehensive region-wide, cross-border assessment of their cumulative environmental impacts has been conducted by appropriate agencies from both countries acting in coordination and the results have been published and subjected to extensive review and public consultation.

¹ "the special nature of the place that we inhabit, including the importance of the habitat and flyway, when taken with the scale of the wind energy projects proposed, the lack of a process to assess cumulative review, and the initial indications of substantial impacts to birds and bats, all lead us to conclude that wind projects proposed for our area should not proceed further until . . . a cumulative wildlife impact assessment involving the US and Canadian governments has occurred." Save The River position on Industrial Wind Development within the St. Lawrence River Valley, July 28, 2010

² In an April 19, 2013 letter opposing the Cape Vincent Wind Power, LLC Article X application (NYS PSC Case 12-F-041), Save The River wrote, "Consistent with our mission of protecting the environmental integrity of the St. Lawrence River and the species, human and animal, that depend on it, we are adamantly opposed to the CVWP Project moving to the application phase under Article 10 until a comprehensive, cumulative assessment of bird and bat mortality is conducted which includes all projects which have been proposed in the River region."