Projet de parc éolien Saint-Cyprien – Mémoire of Patrick Ragaz representing the Kahnawake Environment Protection Office

My name is Patrick Ragaz, and I am representing the Kahnawake Environment Protection Office (KEPO), a division of the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake. I am submitting this mémoire in support of the proposed "Projet de parc éolien Saint-Cyprien" in Saint-Cyprien-de-Napierville. I will first discuss the larger impacts of wind turbines within the global energy context and then comment on the local environmental implications of the project.

**Energy**

Climate change is a global phenomenon that impacts us all. Rising global temperatures are causing adverse impacts including an increase in severe weather events such as flooding and drought and reducing global ice cover resulting in predicted ocean level rise and changing the way of life for northern communities. Governments around the world are recognizing the threats of climate change and are committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to minimize the global temperature rise and associated impacts. It is well understood that coal-fired power production is one of the biggest sources of greenhouse emissions and a global push to move away from this power source is underway.

The Quebec government and Quebecers more generally, understand the nature of the climate change problem and have committed to addressing it. One important facet of change involves diversifying our energy sources. While Quebec is blessed with an abundance of clean electricity (at least from an emissions perspective) owing to the abundance of hydroelectric power installations, the need to exploit other clean technologies such as solar and wind power has been recognized by Hydro Quebec and other stakeholders. The payoff in terms of reduced emissions comes when cleanly produced electricity is sold (particularly south of the border) and offsets coal production. By investing in wind energy, we better position ourselves for the inevitable clean energy future. In comparison, while hydroelectric installations produce clean power once created, the overall footprint from these projects is quite large and can have devastating impacts to local communities and ecosystems.

**Local Impacts**

Turning now to the local scale, possible environmental impacts associated with this project relate to reduced wildlife habitat including in watercourses, direct impacts associated with bird and bat mortality and loss of agriculture.

**Wildlife impacts**

Habitat:

The project is taking place on existing agricultural land. While there are some remnant forest and wetland patches within the study area, these sites have been well classified and no construction is planned in these areas. Recommended setbacks from these features have been respected. Three intermittent tributaries will require crossings as part of the project. The proponent has identified that road crossings at these locations will be designed according to applicable standards to ensure that

impacts of these crossings are minimized. As a result, KEPO is confident that no important habitat for wildlife will be lost as a result of this project. The measures taken may, in fact, improve stream habitat by formalizing crossing locations on the agricultural property.

Birds and bats:

Wind turbines have the potential to cause excess bird and bat mortality if improperly designed or located. Based on the findings of the characterization studies completed by the proponent, this site is not located in a heavily traveled migration corridor. Further, the location of the site within an agricultural area reduces the potential for collisions. The proponent is committing to monitor bird and bat mortality during operation. KEPO supports the need for wildlife mortality monitoring and note that, in the event that mortality is higher than anticipated, modifications to the operation could and should be implemented. Modifications could include alterations to the blade angle of the turbines and / or stopping the wind turbines during key migratory periods.

Agricultural land:

Concerns have been raised regarding the loss of agricultural land resulting from this project. Conversely, the proponent has indicated that there will be no net loss of productive land with a net of only one hectare long-term footprint on the study site. As an environmental organization, KEPO understands the need to protect productive farmland from development. On balance, this project appears to accomplish this goal. Compared to any other possible development, including, for example, a housing project, the project footprint is ultimately very small. In some ways, one could consider that the land will be more productive with the wind turbines in place as another 'harvest', (the wind), will take place concurrently with traditional farming.

Conclusion:

KEPO supports the proposed development of a small-scale, eight unit wind turbine farm in Saint-Cyprien-de-Napierville. The creation of clean energy, the respect for appropriate setbacks, the minimal disturbance to existing natural and agricultural systems, and the existence of proximate infrastructure to deliver the power all lead to the conclusion that this project is a win for the environment. The proposed mitigation measures during construction, operation and decommissioning will ensure a successful project while mitigating potential impacts to the environment and the surrounding community.