

Proposed Changes to the Whiteside County Wind Power Generating Facility Ordinance

**Prepared by: Les Cady
Cady Aerial Spray
Deer Grove
June 7, 2011**

Section 1 Changes Pertaining to Wind Turbines

815-590-2239
lescady@yahoo.com

During a recent conversation I had with a County Board member I was asked “Why should the County deny a landowners right to have a wind turbine installed on their property?” I responded with a question of my own.

Why should landowners who choose not to have a wind turbine installed on their property be allowed to lose their right to treat their farmland by aerial application?

The Whiteside County Wind Power Generating Facility Ordinance was adopted in part to protect landowners who choose not to participate in a wind farm. As an aerial applicator I can tell you that in my professional opinion the current ordinance falls far short of protecting a landowners right to have their crops treated by aircraft!

The many thousands of acres of irrigated farmland in Southeastern Whiteside County are an enormous asset. Every growing season, local farmers contract to grow for companies such as Del Monte and Seneca Foods to grow vegetables. Also, Monsanto (DeKalb), Du Pont (Pioneer), Mycogen, Ag Reliant, and Wyffels to grow seed corn. Farmers in Whiteside County play a direct role in growing vegetables that end up on our store shelves and producing the seeds that grow corn throughout the Midwest.

Many of these companies rely heavily on aerial application to produce these specialty crops. If wind turbines are allowed to be built in Whiteside County without proper protection to non-participating landowners rights, tens of thousands of acres of farmland may be rendered untreatable by agricultural aircraft. Many of these companies, no longer being able to utilize aerial application, would likely move their production elsewhere. That would be a terrible loss to the farmers who contract to grow for these companies, and to the local economy.

In order to properly and sufficiently protect the right of non-participating landowners to have their crops treated by air, I propose the following changes to the ordinance:

- To allow unrestricted access by air to neighboring fields and allow agricultural aircraft to safely navigate, a **setback of 1 statute mile** from each turbine.
- Said setback shall be from the neighboring **property line**, not the “primary structure.”
- “Wind Company” shall reimburse all landowners or tenant farmers for any and all surcharges incurred from aerial applicators due to increased time to treat fields, increased insurance costs, and increased hazard to pilots.
- “Wind Company” shall provide **exact** location including GPS coordinates and height of each wind turbine structure to the County, all local Aerial Applicators, and the Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association **before** turbines are erected.
- “Wind Company” shall in good faith consult each local aerial applicator and the Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association as to the location and layout of wind farm.
- “Wind Company” shall provide means of contact and shall turn off within a period of one hours notice any and all wind turbines deemed necessary by aerial applicators for safe treatment of any farmland.
- “Wind Company” shall provide from the months of May through September 24 hours notice to local aerial applicators of any construction or maintenance crew which will be working at a turbine site. Wind Company shall within one hour evacuate all workers deemed necessary by aerial applicators for safe application.

Low-Flying Aircraft Have A “Towering” Problem.



Wind Energy Development Impacts Everyone.

Aerial spraying, or “crop dusting” gets more challenging with every wind turbine project erected on America’s farmland.

Without careful planning in their placement, farmers could lose the option—and the advantage—of aerial spraying. Agricultural aircraft can treat large areas of land quickly and safely, and may be the only option for treating crops when wet fields, rolling terrain or dense crop foliage exist.

Landowners are being asked to make crucial decisions that will impact farmers and their neighbors for years to come. Improper wind turbine siting may negatively affect aerial applicators, emergency medical flights, pipeline patrols and other low-flying aircraft.

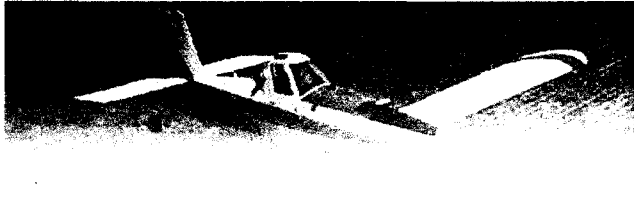
Be sure to consider all the facts before “green lighting” a wind energy installation on your land.

Let’s Be Fair About Sharing The Air

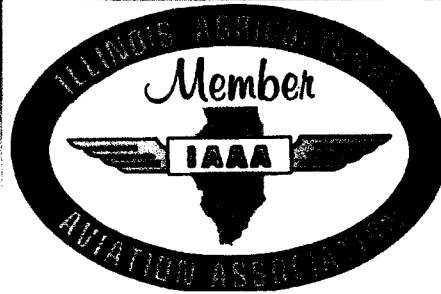
Learn more at www.agaviation.org/towers.htm

A MESSAGE BROUGHT TO YOU BY





WELCOME TO THE IAAA



Wind power farms are being highly touted as a renewable energy source that is clean, safe, and a responsible way to generate electricity for our nation. However, nothing comes without sacrifice and these projects are no exception. The issue is being complicated, either intentionally or otherwise, by not openly addressing the very real fact that farmers with wind generators may lose the option of aerial application of farm protection products, seed, fertilizers, etc. on their farm ground. Possibly more significant is that their neighbor farmers, who have no wind generator(s) and consequently no income from them, stand to lose that option as well.

Some proponents of wind farms tend to dismiss this possibility out of hand, with the explanation that “those guys can fly around them with no problem,” or “just get a helicopter to do it.” Others say that ground application can still be effectively performed so the aerial option is insignificant. Unfortunately, it is just not that simple. Sometimes weather problems and/or timeliness of application dictate an application from the air.

The fact is, it is dangerous to fly within the confines of a wind generator farm. Without going into the technical aspects, windmills can cause vertigo sensations, create unstable wind conditions, and extend high enough to seriously affect the way an aircraft can work a field. That is why even a neighboring field without a wind generator may not be a candidate for aerial application: there’s no room to make a turn.

Proponents of wind farms point that the \$4-5,000 paid each year to the landowner is a lot of money for a small piece of farm ground. Asian Rust has not been a factor thus far in Illinois, but the potential is huge. Match the \$5,000 against a possible 80% yield loss of soybeans expected to average 60 bushels per acre. At \$12/ bushel, that’s \$576. If it’s an 80 acre field, that’s \$46,080 lost. Cropping decisions will be tough in the future considering you can’t change your mind once the wind generator is up and operating.

Will a farmer find an aerial applicator willing to book a field in the vicinity of a wind power generator? The answer is “maybe.” It will most definitely be at an increased application cost; possibly double. Helicopters are not the answer because there are only a few working the Midwest and they don’t like working in the wind farms either.

The Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association (IAAA) has been disappointed in the lack of candor by some wind generator proponents with regard to farmers’ potential loss of an aerial application option. We believe it is critical that a truthful picture be presented so that an informed decision can be reached. In June, 2005, the following Resolution was passed by the IAAA Board of Directors. It was re-endorsed on March 10, 2009.

ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL AVIATION ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the need for affordable electric power and the efficient distribution of that power to the point of its consumption, and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the environmental benefits of wind generated electrical power, and

WHEREAS, we understand the financial considerations involved when decisions are made to place wind turbines on otherwise productive farm ground, and

WHEREAS, wind turbine generator farms create uniquely hazardous and unacceptable dangers to pilots flying agricultural aircraft in a ground environment,

WE HEREBY RESOLVE that, in the interest of pilot safety, we will refuse to make an aerial application of any product inside a grouping of wind generators, or to farm land immediately adjacent to a grouping of wind generators, should that proximity be considered hazardous by the pilot of the agricultural aircraft.

Approved by unanimous vote of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association.

