



# WIND FACILITIES

The new Renewable Energy Approval will support the Green Energy Act and the Ontario Government's climate change action plan that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase renewable energy generation and conservation and create thousands of green jobs in Ontario.

## Wind Energy

Wind turbines can come in various sizes depending on the energy they generate. Wind speed increases with height above the ground, so most wind turbines are mounted on tall towers.

## Renewable Energy Approval (REA)

Wind facilities generating **less than or equal to 3 kW** do not require an REA. The structures supporting free-standing and building-mounted wind turbines may require municipal building permits. For further information, contact the local building department. These turbines typically generate enough energy to power your dishwasher and fridge.



1.5 kW wind turbine

Wind facilities generating **over 3 kW but less than 50 kW** require an REA, however, the requirements are simplified and there are no mandatory setbacks. These facilities are sometimes called “small wind” and could support from 2 to 38 households, or supplement a small commercial operation.



50 kW wind turbine



Large scale wind turbine

Wind facilities generating **50 kW and over** require an REA. These facilities could supplement larger scale industrial needs or a minimum of 38 households. Wind facilities over 50 kW generating a noise level of 102 dBA or louder must meet a minimum 550 metre setback from buildings, such as a residence, used by people not participating in the wind project. Where roadway noise exceeds 40 decibels, a noise study can be done to determine the appropriate distance. All turbines over 50kW must be set back the height of the tower from properties where the land owner is not involved in the project. This can be reduced to a distance equal to the blade length plus 10 metres where there are no surrounding land use concerns. These facilities must also be set back a distance equal to blade length plus 10 metres from the right of way for roads and railways.

## Offshore Wind Turbines

Offshore wind facilities require an REA. They do not have province-wide standard setbacks at this time; each application will be reviewed based on the local situation. Applicants need to conduct noise studies, demonstrating they do not exceed a noise level of 40 decibels (approximately the noise level experienced in a quiet office or library). They must identify any negative impacts to the natural environment that the project may have and explain how they will mitigate any impacts.

## General Information

The Renewable Energy Approval integrates study requirements under the Environmental Assessment Act and provincial standards under the Environmental Protection Act. The improved process replaces what was largely an applicant-driven environmental assessment framework with clear provincial rules and requirements. The REA process continues to ensure transparent decision-making and mandatory public consultation.

## Consultation

The REA has established clear requirements around public consultation and community awareness. Applicants must notify nearby landowners and the community early in the planning stages, and hold at least two public consultation meetings. They must also consult with municipalities on matters related to servicing and infrastructure, and must engage Aboriginal communities early in the REA process to ensure that any impacts to Aboriginal or treaty rights are addressed.

To learn more, visit:

**Ministry of the Environment**

[www.ene.gov.on.ca](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca)

**Renewable Energy Facilitation Office**

1-877-440-REFO (7336)

[REFO@ontario.ca](mailto:REFO@ontario.ca)



## Appealing an Approval Decision

Anyone can appeal the approval of a proposed renewable energy project. The Environmental Review Tribunal will have six months to assess whether or not the proposed project will cause serious harm to human health or serious and irreversible harm to plant life, animal life or the natural environment.

This balances the need for certainty and timeliness of approvals with the need for legitimate concerns to be heard and addressed.

For more information on the Environmental Review Tribunal and how to appeal, please visit [www.ert.gov.on.ca](http://www.ert.gov.on.ca).

