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national farmers union
In Union Is Strength

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NFU WELCOMES ONTARIO PLAN FOR SMALL-SCALE WIND ENERGY

The National Farmers Union (NFU) says the plan unveiled by the Ontario Government designed to encourage small, local renewable energy production is a positive step.

NFU Coordinator Don Mills said the Ontario Government's "Standard Offer Program" will make it easier and more cost-effective for farmers, rural landowners and small businesses to sell renewable power to the provincial grid.

"Farmers need more diversified sources of income and the province needs clean, sustainable and decentralized generation of electricity," said Mills. "Both farmers and the province's electricity consumers will be winners from this policy."

In November, 2004, the NFU adopted a resolution urging governments to utilize wind power in a way that maximizes benefits to farmers. "We recommended programs in Canada be modeled on Advanced Renewable Tariffs, which is a well-established program in Europe with a proven record of benefiting farmers and rural communities. This European model appears to be the basis for the Ontario program," stated Mills.

The program has the potential to help revitalize local rural communities by promoting and facilitating local individual and cooperative ownership, noted Mills.

In 2004, the Ontario Government laid out a commitment to generate 5 percent of Ontario's total energy capacity from new renewable sources by 2007, and 10 percent by 2010. The Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA) prepared a report outlining the criteria for a program offering a standard rate for electricity to small or community-based renewable power projects. That report, which received input from the NFU, was released in 2005.

Under a Standard Offer contract, all small-scale renewable energy producers will be able to sell renewable power to the grid for 20 years at a guaranteed price of 11 cents per kilowatt hour.

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