

Ontario couple loses wind turbines property tax case

Review board rules no evidence nearby wind turbines devalued homes

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Ontario government officials argued that wind turbines had no impact on property values. (CBC)

An Ontario couple who launched a case arguing that nearby wind turbines devalued their waterfront home and should be a factor in their property assessment has lost the challenge.

A two-person panel from the province's Assessment Review Board has ruled that proximity to wind turbines would not be a factor in deciding how much property tax Edward and Gail Kenney should pay.

The Kenneys first told CBC News last October about the potentially precedent-setting court challenge against the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, a Crown corporation in charge of assigning values to properties for tax purposes.

The couple has lived on Wolfe Island for 48 years and appealed their property tax assessments on the grounds that the 86 wind turbines erected around their home brought unwanted noise and posed a health concern.

"We figure we've lost 40 to 50 per cent of the value of these places," Edward Kenney told CBC News.

But the decision from the review board begged to differ, saying there was no such evidence the turbines negatively impacted property values.

The Kenneys' property tax assessment was set at \$357,000 in 2010. They had said there had been virtually no real estate sales from over a three-year period near the turbines on Wolfe Island.

Grassroots organizations concerned about potential adverse health effects linked to wind turbines say that the constant, low-frequency noise emitted can disturb sleep or cause headaches and nosebleeds. Champions of wind energy, however, say there are no such health risks and argue that wind farms are a prime example of clean energy.