

To the Community Affairs References Committee – Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms, Australia

I am a resident of Essex County, Ontario, Canada. I, my husband and son are surrounded by 24 Industrial wind turbines, 4 within 1 km, 24 within 5 km and the closest of these is approximately 640 meters from the center of my home. In the last week I have had 5 sleepless nights, ear ticking that comes and goes and headaches almost every day. All symptoms that have been more prevalent since the onset of winter and the noise from the turbines has increased. I am starting to wonder if there is a cumulative effect from the turbines noise.

In Ontario through the permit process for a wind developer, they must submit a noise assessment which indicates that residents will not be subjected to more than 40 dB A of noise from the turbines and up to 51 dB A based on the assumption that noise from wind will drown out noise from the turbines with increasing wind speeds. The unfortunate thing is that the government body that is responsible for determining compliance in Ontario Ministry of Environment, has openly admitted that it does not have at this time, an acceptable scientific methodology to determine if noise is out of compliance. Therefore despite residents complaining about disruptive noise, there is nothing in place that is legally binding to determine if the turbine noise is non-compliant. I suspect a similar scenario is happening in Australia since reports indicate residents are having to abandon their homes and are suffering from sleepless nights.

As a resident living with the incessant swooshing, and potential safety hazards of blade or ice throw of these giants located at less than 200 meters from my property line, I feel I have been betrayed when at every turn, and despite my efforts to inform myself and present scientifically valid data, I was shut down by the wind industry's marketing spin which played to a visceral satisfaction that they are providing income to local farmers, to my municipality, cleaning up our air or reducing CO₂ and providing green jobs. I have made every effort to research if this is the case and have found that wind energy has minimal impact for the dollar spent on Greenhouse gas emissions (data from Energinet.dk the operator of Denmark's natural gas and electricity grids, show that CO₂ are about at the same level as they were before turbines were erected. This in large part is due to the near zero-population growth and exorbitant energy taxes, not wind energy) and the supposed green jobs are being atrophied in other sectors at the rate of 2.2 jobs in places like Spain

We are also against this kind of development for the principal effect "green" energy has in raising our electricity bills and NOT closing down coal or gas fired electrical generation, thus NOT reducing CO₂ emissions because wind energy is intermittent, unreliable and non dispatchable.

The effect on my community is one of division where neighbours shun each other since we refused to sign on with the wind developer to host turbines on our land. As a result our custom work business suffered and neighbours who we combined crops for, no longer use our services.

We feel it is important to let you know that you will do yourself no favour by supporting any kind of government policy which does not use real science. This would mean doing a scientific assessment of the technical, economic and environmental (including health) aspects of proposed alternative energies. This has not been done for things like Industrial Wind energy. Many within government are instead asking to throw out conventional sources of power that have enabled our modern society and replace them with unproven, unreliable, uneconomical, unenvironmental “renewable” sources. That is insane!

Because many within government is not applying traditional due diligence or standard scientific methodology needed to discern if the claims that the wind industry make are actually true and sharing such with the public, we end up with people superficially supporting these kinds of “green” projects without determining if they are environmentally (which includes health and social well-being), technically or economically sound. Consequently and unfortunately the larger percentage of the population has been misled and therefore, in turn they continue to support the construction of hundreds of turbines up around rural residents.

Sincerely

Colette McLean,
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