

Keith Ayotte, PhD

10.02.2011

Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600
Australia

Re: Submission to Senate Inquiry into *The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms*

To whom it may concern,

As a citizen who is becoming increasingly alarmed at the lack of action on climate change by former and current governments, I'm compelled to do something I've never done before; submit my opinion to a government committee. As an atmospheric scientist with experience in a number of countries around the world, I take the informed view that there is no longer a debate about if climate change is real and that its cause is anthropogenic. The scientific community long ago presented clear evidence that this is the case and that case grows stronger, not weaker, as time goes on. However, a number of individuals and organisations have attempted to prolong the debate by insisting that any number of subjective and often times emotionally charged lines of argument be followed. Perhaps in the name of giving anyone and everyone a fair go at presenting their views or in many cases simple ignorance of well known, scientifically proven facts, the waters have been muddied, leading to inaction by those responsible for the long-term welfare of our country and indeed the planet. Inaction is a clear victory for the climate skeptics who clearly have no compulsion about ruining the planet's environment for future generations.

The issues associated with *The Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms* have great potential to be similarly affected by arguments that are subjective in their basis. As such it is my most strident wish that this inquiry take into account, where possible, facts and not hearsay and emotional arguments. To wit, I would point out that (a) in the list of particulars (*Any adverse health effects for people living in close proximity to wind farms*) has already been well examined (<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/new0048.htm>) by the National Health and Research Council. It seems that that only thing that is to be gained by going over this ground again is delay and obfuscation. Similarly, (b) in the list of particulars (*Concerns over the excessive noise and vibrations emitted by wind farms which are in close proximity to people's homes*) in its wording seems to be answering the question before a single fact has been put on the table, by implying that noise from turbines is "excessive". This hardly seems to be an

objective approach. The noise produced by wind turbines is well known and has been for some time. How that noise propagates is also well known and it is a simple matter to place wind turbines where they will affect residences in a very predictable way, minimizing their effects. Simple exclusion zones around residences (or any other building of concern) can easily be established on a case-by-case basis is regularly done in the construction of wind farms. These are facts. This is in contrast to much of the discourse to date that has been rife with repeated nonsensical hearsay or misinformation promulgated to confuse, intimidate otherwise sway the public toward an anti-wind viewpoint .

It is imperative that this inquiry be objective in its operation and judgment and that it not be swayed by political objectives or the self-interest of those who stand to gain by inaction. I would implore those involved in the inquiry to call upon experts and authorities in their respective fields rather than going down the well worn path of buying into the arguments of climate skeptics and self-interested groups. This is the path to inaction, the cost of which will be born by future generations.

Sincerely yours,

Keith Ayotte, PhD