

February 9, 2011
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600

Dear sir/madam

Ref: Inquiry into the Social and Economic Impact of Rural Wind Farms.

I am writing to you today to object to wind farms been located in close proximity to rural communities and destroying native flora and fauna. Why is it that a country as big as Australia needs to have these industrial monstrosities located so close to people that it is detrimental to their health? I am also flabbergasted to understand how any government can allow a developer to destroy native flora and fauna, which has taken hundreds of years to grow, so that they can put up wind turbines that will dwarf any of the native trees and hillsides around them and say that they are being green.

While I am in favour of the government trying to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions generated by coal fired electricity production, wind farms are nothing more than a political stunt that will have no great benefit to the people of NSW. The cost to install them is significant and they are highly inefficient so I wonder just how green they are when you take into consideration all the greenhouse gasses that were needed to construct them in the first place. Wind farms are unable and will never be able to produce base load power so why should they be considered at all because it is not like you can suddenly say we need some more power so let's turn on the wind and generate some, this is just ridiculous. They also have significant impacts on the environment and the residents. Studies have even shown that local residents who live near existing wind farms are suffering medical problems as well as having their property values plummet. The environmental impacts are just as bad with the danger of wildlife flying into them and I bet nobody has asked the local kangaroo population or wombats how they feel with having to live near a constant drone from the turbines or done a study on how the drone affects their habitat. For all we know it will probably drive them away into areas that may not be suitable for them thereby risking their existence.

Wind farms are only 25-30% efficient; usually operate well below this, so I don't know anybody who would buy something that would only work for 30% of the time, how silly is that. Imagine buying a car and trying to travel 100km only to find that after 30km's you have to get out and walk the rest of the way, what a joke. I understand that they are trying to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but if the state and federal governments were serious about this, then they should surely be exploring the possibility of nuclear power. This is the only true greenhouse gas free emissions you can have and several countries overseas have been running nuclear power plants for decades now with no adverse effects. It also has the advantage of been able to supply base load power which is what is needed.

From my research I have found that nuclear power could be the most valuable resource we can have and as such our governments should at least think about it. For instance and quote: "There are little or no greenhouse gas emissions from using uranium to generate electricity. According to the U.S. Department of Energy and the Energy Information Administration report "Voluntary Reporting of Greenhouse Gases 1997" (published June 1, 1999), the single most effective emission control strategy for utilities was to increase nuclear generation. The same report states that "Nuclear generated electricity avoids almost 700 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year in the U.S". Also when you look at France it is clear that a country can have an abundance of power and produce extremely low

levels of greenhouse gas emissions. To quote what I have researched "In France, Électricité de France (EDF) — the country's main electricity generation and Distribution Company— manages the country's 59 nuclear power plants. As of 2008, these plants produce 87.5% of both EDF's and France's electrical power production (of which much is exported), making EDF the world leader in production of nuclear power by percentage".

There are twofold advantages for a nuclear plant and they are, first you will not produce any greenhouse emissions, or very little, and secondly as they can run 24 hours a day 7 days a week, like a coal fired generator now does, they can be used for base load power thereby enabling an existing coal fired plant to be taken out of service saving even more gas emissions.

I have also read with interest how some people claim that the wind farms will create tourism. Well from what I have heard and seen from people who live near them, they can't wait to get away from them so I don't see how promoting them will make people come and see them. Why are they being built and proposed for rural areas then were the people who live in these areas are here because they want to escape the hustle and bustle of city life and live a peaceful existence. If you want to make them a tourist attraction then put a wind farm on Sydney Heads then you can promote them along with the harbour bridge and the opera house. Maybe a catch cry for it would be come to Sydney and enjoy the lovely spinning sights of the Sydney Wind Farm. Mind you this is not such a bad idea as it would also have the added advantage of being in close proximity to the electricity grid so it would be a huge saving for the developer as he would not have to build big towers, poles and wires to transport the electricity like they have to do when they are located in rural areas.

In my view if nuclear is not an option then solar panels are a much better alternative than wind power, in the short term at least to try and meet the 20% renewable energy target. I am sure that with all the money the government is handing out to the wind industry that they could use this money instead to put into a solar scheme (similar to the one the government has now the solar credits scheme) and encourage people to install solar panels on their roofs. Imagine how much energy could be produced if the governments of Australia could convince say 20% of households to install solar panels.

For instance from the 2006 census figures there were 5,472,527 stand alone homes in Australia, Therefore 20% of this is 1,094,505. Now say these homes installed a 1.5KW system, which would generate about 6KW/hr per day, then the total output would be 6,567,030 KW's or 6567 MW of power approx. Of course these numbers would be in a perfect world and I am sure that some losses would come into these figures but still the numbers are staggering. Also nowadays most solar panels are coming with a 25 year output guarantee which is a far better life expectancy than the average 15 years from wind turbines.

This appears to me to be a far better option than to persist with industrial size wind farms. I have also noted that some people are in favour of the wind farms, usually because they are the hosts for the turbines and as such they are paid handsomely for this. They have stated that they are pleased to have the opportunity to diversify their farms and therefore generate more profit for themselves and help them keep farming and survive. I can't help wondering however if they have thought about their neighbouring farmers who now have potentially no way of generating an income due to the fact that they can no longer live on their properties due to health problems and as such their farms are now worthless. This seems to me to fly in the face of our famous Australian spirit of mates helping mates, as evident in the recent Queensland floods, when it appears that people are being selfish and ruining other people's livelihoods just so they can survive.

All I would like to say in finishing is that you all please understand the implications to everybody concerned and recommend that these wind farms are either located in isolated

areas away from the general public or get rid of them all together and start concentrating on the future power needs of the state and country and seriously look at much better and viable alternatives such as nuclear power, gas fired power stations or even solar as all of these options are by far more beneficial to both the residents of Australia and also the environment than any form of wind farm will ever be.

Yours faithfully

Graham Laurie.