

MULTI-MUNICIPAL WIND TURBINE WORKING GROUP

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RE: HEALTH CANADA WIND TURBINE NOISE STUDY

AN OPEN LETTER TO

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister pm@pm.gc.ca

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Health minister_ministre@hc-sc.gc.ca

Contradictions and bias undermine credibility of the Health Canada Wind Turbine Noise Study

The Multi-municipal Wind Turbine Working Group is comprised of elected municipal councillors and appointed citizens from parts of Southern Ontario where approximately 30% of industrial wind turbines are concentrated. Over the past several years we have received a growing number of delegations from constituents whose health has been adversely affected by proximity to the wind turbines. It is not easy to listen to people who continue to suffer from ringing and pressure in the ears, pounding vibrations in the head and chest, nausea, dizziness and the ongoing inability to sleep. Their stories are especially disturbing because we know these people; we know they are not lying; and it is our responsibility under the Municipal Act to protect their health.

We are dismayed that the recently released Health Canada Wind Turbine Noise and Health Study has ignored the distress of real people by hiding behind meaningless “estimated” noise projections and predictive modeling rather than first making professional clinical observations based on the histories of actual sufferers. Investigation of anecdotal evidence is the foundation of all medicine. The Health

Canada study summary contains no reference to the growing body of research that contradicts the main theme of the summary. Our Grey-Bruce Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Hazel Lynn has found 18 peer-reviewed studies that “provide reasonable evidence . . . that an association exists between wind turbines and distress in humans”. The Brown County (Wisconsin) Board of Health has declared its wind turbines a “public health nuisance” and a “human health hazard for all people . . . who are exposed to Infrasound/Low Frequency Noise and other emissions potentially harmful to human health”.

Key findings contradict summary of results

The key findings have been released without data for verification and without peer review. Epidemiologists have pointed out that the study lacks scientific credibility. Gaps, biases and errors in methodology make it unreliable. For example, only 1234 out of the 2004 dwellings selected responded to the survey compromising its validity. Only 20% of the homes studied were “near” turbines. And yet homes up to 10 kilometres away *were* included, diluting the results from the homes near the turbines. And the serious issues of low frequency noise, cyclical sound and amplitude modulation were simply overlooked.

At the same time, the study contradicts itself. It found that wind turbine noise is “statistically related to several self-reported health effects including blood pressure, migraines, tinnitus, dizziness, and disturbed sleep”. And yet the key findings which have been widely publicized claim that “no evidence was found to support a link between exposure to wind turbine noise and any of the self-reported illnesses”. Does Health Canada no longer advocate the precautionary principle which calls for rigorous caution when the safety of any group is even remotely threatened, acknowledging that lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to protect them?

It is our belief that that the premature marketing of the key findings has been a disservice to the people of Canada, an insult to those who continue to suffer the adverse effects of the turbines, and has resulted in loss of respect and credibility for Health Canada. We await your explanation as to how Health Canada came to its conclusion that there are no health problems when obviously there are.

Yours truly,

Mark Davis, Chair
Deputy Mayor, Arran-Elderslie

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