

From:
To: [Committee, EC \(SEN\); Madigan, John \(Private\)](#)
Subject: FW: Submission re Excessive Noise from Windfarms Bill
Date: Friday, 2 November 2012 10:45:44 AM

Dear Committee Members,

We wish to submit our views about the Inquiry into Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment (Excessive Noise from Wind Farms) Bill 2012.

We fully support Senators Madigan and Xenophon's changes to the abovementioned Bill. We live about 5 kms from the Lal Lal Windfarm which has been granted a permit but is yet to start construction. Since we first heard about this windfarm proposal we have tried to learn as much as we can about how this would impact on both our family and our community. What we have learned about noise issues is of great concern to us.

We have visited several windfarms in the last few years and have found that noise levels seem to vary a lot from day to day. It is our experience though, that noise levels are exceeding current noise regulations on a regular basis. We feel that noise emanating from windfarms is a crucial issue in communities that have to live near them and that Senators Madigan and Xenophon's changes to the Bill can only help to improve the situation.

We believe one of the key preventative measures that needs to be looked at is the establishing of what could be colloquially called the "Noise Police". At the moment, the only noise monitoring required by a windfarm permit is carried out by the proponent. This is a ludicrous situation. There is no noise monitoring required to be done by an external, independent body. We believe that, no matter which noise standards are being used, the "Noise Police" need to be monitoring this.

In any other industrial facility, pollutants of any sort, including noise, are monitored on a regular basis. If a nearby resident complains of smells, excessive noise or water runoff the EPA test the levels of the pollutant and have the authority to force the owners to fix the problem or the plant will be closed down. For some reason, these rules do not apply to windfarms. If a nearby resident complains, they can only complain to the windfarm company themselves. After multiple complaints, the windfarm company themselves might carry out some noise monitoring. This is a highly unsatisfactory and unethical way to manage the situation. We imagine the EPA or similar body would be the "Noise Police" and would have the authority to force windfarms to comply to the industry standards.

Setting up the "Noise Police" would have many benefits. Noise levels can be determined in a way that people can believe and trust. This could actually provide a level of comfort to people. Another key reason though is that windfarm companies would have to seriously consider the noise effects before they build the turbines. If they think they might have a noise issue with some that are too close to homes, and they know the noise levels will be monitored by an independent body who has the power to shut turbines down, then they are far less likely to build turbines in problematic locations to start with.

We believe it is in everyone's best interests that proper, independent noise monitoring is carried out. We understand that turbines cost in the order of \$3 million each. It would be an incredible waste of money and resources if turbines are built in unsuitable locations and later have to be shut down. Who would be responsible for paying for a turbine to be dismantled and removed? Nobody would claim the responsibility is theirs and the turbines would simply decay where they stand.

The proposed Lal Lal Windfarm has almost **200 non-participating homes within 2kms of turbines** and about 800 within 5 kms. This is an astonishing number. We believe there is no other windfarm in the country set in such a densely populated area. The potential to have noise problems here is enormous.

We strongly support Senators Madigan and Xenophon with the changes to the Bill and hope to see this taken further with the establishment of the "Noise Police".

Yours sincerely,

John and Heather McMahon