

Paper to Note 5

Testimonial on Noise from Wind Turbines

I received an email awhile ago saying that you are collecting statements from people who are suffering from the effects of noise from wind turbines. I am contacting you on behalf of my wife, Beverley, who is particularly sensitive to low frequency noise.

I hope I am not too late in submitting the following statement since I forgot about the draft email I did back in January.

Following is our account for the Petitions Committee.

Executive Summary:

Beverley is particularly sensitive to low frequency noise (LFN). She has been hearing LFN near Cwmdy, Carmarthenshire ever since the winter of 2006, especially when the wind directions are from the S-SE. The LFN was measured in our home by an Environmental Health Officer, so we know the noise is not imaginary.

An Excel summary of the recorded data is attached. It shows that the loudest average noise (green bars) is in the low frequency end of the noise spectrum, esp. 12.5-20 Hz bands. We know another person who started hearing LFN at about the same time but unfortunately he passed away about 18 months ago.

Beverley also hears the noise in many elevated areas in East Carmarthenshire - on top of Mynydd Llanllwni (before Alltwallis wind farm was built), near Cwmman Television transmitter mast, and even on the mountains around Myddfai.

We think the source of the noise recorded at our home is a wind farm nearly 25 miles from our home as the crow flies. We cannot conclusively prove that the suspect wind farm is the source of the noise since we do not have the funds or the equipment to carry out the necessary tests.

However, the observations we have made over the last 5 years indicates that the suspect wind farm could be the source of the LFN Beverley continues to hear when the wind blows from that direction.

Beverley frequently hears the LFN. Most of the time she finds it more of an annoyance since we live in such a quiet location. Occasionally she will hear it very loudly and can have some difficulty sleeping on those occasions. Sometimes she can't stay in the house since the LFN seems to build up a pressure in her head.

We wish to request that the Welsh Assembly Government commission a detailed independent study of wind farm noise to determine how far LFN can travel and how it affects the health of people and livestock. The wind farm industry has no vested interest to carry out such a study.

Background:

We live in a very rural part of Carmarthenshire and don't even have any mains electricity within a kilometre of our home, so electromagnetic pollution is not the source of the LFN. Solar PV panels supply

most of our electricity from March to Sept. We can't even see any wind turbines from our home since the hills obscure nearly all our distant views.

Beverley only hears the LFN when the wind blows from a SW to SE direction, and particularly loud when winds come from a S-SE direction. She can't hear any LFN when winds come from a northerly direction.

For 2 years we had no idea what the source of the noise might be, until we were told it might be a wind farm. When we investigated this possibility, we found that the start of the LFN problem coincided with the commissioning of a wind farm nearly 25 miles SE from our home.

An environmental health officer took a snapshot recording in June 2009 when the noises were particularly loud during a spell of hot dry weather. We were told that the frequency was far too low to be traffic noise - the nearest main road (the A40) is at least 5 miles away. The officer making the recording even suggested that the noises may be produced by something like a wind farm.

Summary observations relating to LFN:

- 1) The LFN is loudest when winds come from a S-SE direction. It can be heard in any direction from W through to E
- 2) No LFN is heard when winds come from a northerly direction (NW-NE).
- 3) The LFN started in autumn or winter of 2006, coinciding with the commissioning of a wind farm about 25 miles away.
- 4) The recorded noise is loudest in the low frequency range (10-50 Hz) - far too low for traffic.

All these observations suggest that the suspect wind farm might be the source of the LFN which has been recorded at our home.

Since LFN can cause serious health problems, particularly to those who are very sensitive to LFN, detailed independent noise and health studies should be carried out, as a matter of urgency, on existing wind farms to assess what adverse health effects LFN may have on people, livestock, pets and wildlife.

There should be a moratorium on the building of further wind farms until independent noise studies are carried out and the data analysed.

I hope the Welsh Assembly Government will take this issue seriously and commission proper research on this matter.