



---

June 27, 2016

Vermont Public Service Board  
112 State Street, 4th Floor  
Montpelier, VT 05620

Re: Temporary Sound Standards to be set as legislated by S.260

Dear Public Service Board,

Vermont Environmental Research Associates, Inc. (VERA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments as the Board develops a temporary rule as legislated this past June in S.260. VERA supports the proposal submitted by Renewable Energy Vermont

We are long-time Vermont residents, and have over 35 years experience developing and monitoring performance of wind energy projects for our clients. Our experience includes Vermont's first commercial wind electric generation facility, the Searsburg Wind Energy Facility commissioned in 1997, to more recently the Georgia Mountain Community Wind ("GMCW") Facility commissioned in 2012. For the latter, we are responsible for responding to inquiries raised by the public. From this unique perspective we offer the following considerations and comments to the Board as it prepares its interim wind turbine sound rule.

"Can I take pictures?" "Where's the noise?" These are the most common questions from among the hundreds and hundreds of community members, school groups, public officials, journalists, and others that visit the wind energy facilities mentioned above.

What are uncommon are neighbor complaints on wind turbine sound. This is substantiated in the Department of Public Service ("DPS") report to the legislature this past session that identifies, between October 2012 – December 2015, the DPS logged 77 complaints from four complainants for the Georgia Mountain Community Wind Facility (commissioned Dec. 31,2012). Of the 4 complainants, we are aware of one for a road condition, one from significant distance south, leaving two complainants filing the remaining 75 complaints. The fact that there have been only two sound complainants over three years of operation at GMCW cannot be overstated. The vast majority of the public living near this facility have not expressed any concerns over wind turbine sound.

There are more than 105 residential properties located with a mile of GMCW. For balance to the two complainants identified above, through the Public Service Board Docket 8167, a greater number of residents nearby GMCW provided positive viewpoints -- indicating the operation of the facility does not impact their lives negatively, particularly from sound.

See the following YouTube videos and attached letters supportive of the Georgia Mountain Community Wind Facility:

Resident of Milton, Vermont less than a mile from Georgia Mountain Wind Facility:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdv136sRiEI><sup>1</sup>

Resident on Georgia Mountain Road, Georgia, Vermont, approximately a mile from the Georgia Mountain Wind Facility <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UZD-n4sHN4>.

Resident Milton, Vermont less than a mile from Georgia Mountain Wind Facility:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tSbXYaytZ8>.

Five letters from neighbors of the Georgia Mountain Wind Facility (attached at the end).

We hope the Board keeps its charge to develop sound rules for wind turbines in perspective, considering the sound ‘problem’ is largely an emotional one, not a health issue. There is no scientific research indicating that sound from wind turbines causes a negative health impact. When considering this topic, we offer the following reminder of scientific reviews as the Board works to create a rule guiding the sound limits from wind generation above 500kW:

The 2014 Canadian government’s health department study involved more than 1238 households located near wind farms looking for evidence of a connection between exposures to wind turbine sound—at multiple distances and sound levels—and found “no evidence” of a link to health problems and “no association” with stress or sleep issues.<sup>2</sup>

A 2012 independent panel of experts contracted by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts similarly concluded that “There is no evidence for a set of health effects, from exposure to wind turbines that could be characterized as a ‘Wind Turbine Syndrome.’<sup>3</sup>

When evaluating the sounds generated by wind turbines, again, science is the best basis for rule making. Peer-reviewed, scientific research can enable the Board to develop an informed standard that will assist Vermont in achieving its renewable energy goals and contribute to combating climate change.

VERA supports the proposal and comments submitted by Renewable Energy Vermont and its recommendations that the Board continue to regulate based on peer-reviewed science and established public health standards.

Respectfully Submitted,



Martha Staskus  
Vermont Environmental Research Associates, Inc.  
enc: GMCW Neighbor letters.



John Zimmerman

---

<sup>1</sup> Recorded by Vermonters for a Clean Environment, published May, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Wind Turbine Noise and Health Study, Health Canada 2014 <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/noise-bruit/turbine-eoliennes/pamphlet-brochure-eng.php>

<sup>3</sup> Wind Turbine Health Impact Study: Report of Independent Expert Panel Study 2012  
<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dep/energy/wind/turbine-impact-study.pdf>

TO:  
Public Service Board.

I, Peter C. Starels, live at 250 Westford Road Milton Vt. 05468. My wife, Karen, and her son Nick, & his fiancé Crystal moved into our home in November 2013. We can see the Georgia Mtn. windmills from our side yard. We have NEVER heard and noise, vibration, or any form of disturbance/irritation since we moved in. Our house abuts the property on which the windmills are located. I work during the week in Clifton Park NY, and Nick (Hendry) is currently attending the Police Academy in Pittsford Vt., therefore we are not available on Tuesday to attest to this ourselves.



5/10/14

PETER STARELS

Cheryl Awwone  
20 North Road  
Milton.

I live about <sup>about</sup> 2 miles from the turbines and have a perfect view of them from my living room window. I have no objections to them as part of the scenery. I feel they are quite majestic.

I have walked north on North Road from my house as far as the railroad tracks ~~at~~ once or twice + often as far as Husky. I have NEVER heard any noise that I could attribute to the turbines on the mountain. I do not hear anything from my house. I walked up to the turbines one very windy day this past Feb. on the Sugarm Access road behind the Sugar house. Even at the top I heard nothing more than a gentle whoosh whoosh as the blades spun + it was windy enough to almost blow me over at the top.

Living on the end of the road we are fortunate to not really have a noise problem and for the most part we don't even really know they're there. Occasionally if the southwest wind blows and that is rarely. We are outside all the time and work our 40 acres and really don't notice them.

We are about 1 mile from the turbines

The Barrows + Mossey Family's  
Bruce + Linda Barrows  
Tommy Barrows +  
Alan Mossey

1698 + 1866  
Georgia Mtn. Rd.  
Fairfax, VT, 05454

May 11, 2014

Ronald & Diane Palmer  
15 Westford Road  
Milton, Vermont, 05468

To: Vermont Public Service Board (PSB) Public Hearing Docket 8167

We live about ½ mile from the Georgia Mountain wind farm with the front of our house facing the mountain with the four turbines in line across the top of the mountain line in clear sight of us, weather permitting, which is almost always. We have lived in this house since the fall time of 2000, with our children and pets,

We look upon the four turbine towers, spinning away, each day as we leave our house, or move around our property. We affectionately refer to the turbines as “Gently Giants” as they quietly produce millions of watts of electricity, some of which powers our home. We have never heard any sound what so ever from these massive servants that work endlessly to keep our beautiful state’s cleaner by producing clean electricity.

I am impressed that this technology is available at a reasonable cost, to be able to soar up into the sky, and handle the sometime severe weather, and yet continue to produce such huge amounts of electricity, merely from having a wind blow by it. I am amazed to think that the blades, which are over 300 feet in diameter, and weigh in excess of 50,000 lbs. for the three blades, is made to spin from seemingly mild winds that blow by them, almost every day of the year.

All in all, we would never even know the turbines were there, so close to our home, if we didn’t look at them, for they are so quiet, and unimposing, even though they are giants on top of the mountain, serving us.

I applaud this wind energy endeavor, and pray that our fair state, which is so noise and air pollution conscience, would push hard for development of these clean power generators.

Respectfully,  
Ron and Diane Palmer





Martha Staskus &lt;mstaskus@earthturbines.com&gt;

---

**Re-sending letter.....**

1 message

---

**Crosscarol2@aol.com** <Crosscarol2@aol.com>  
To: mstaskus@allearthrenewables.com

Mon, May 12, 2014 at 8:54 PM

Hi Martha

Per your request -

We are unable to attend your meeting Tuesday evening in Morrisville, Vt. so I am sending this to you.

We live on Cross Road in Milton, Vt. which is located off Westford Road. We have a clear view of the wind turbines located on Georgia Mountain.

We hear very little noise from them. We do hear a "WHOOSH... WHOOSH" as the turbines spin, but it is not bothersome to us. Occasionally when the air is just right, or they are pointed in the right direction, they are a little louder on the 'whoosh' noise, but it still is not loud enough to bother us.

Some folks are saying that the turbines sound like an old washing machine 'chugging', but we do not hear anything like that.

We have also heard that the turbines will effect birds and wildlife. We have not seen anything that would substantiate that. We still have the deer coming around, we still see turkeys, and we still have mourning doves, goldfinches, chickadees, hummingbirds and a variety of other birds coming to our feeders. So apparently they are not bothered by the turbines either.

We do not have a problem with the turbines. We only wish that we could benefit from some of the power that they are producing.

Caroline & Arlon Cross  
Milton, VT