

Dear members of the PSB,

I'm writing this letter to add my input to the temporary sound standards for industrial wind turbines currently being adopted. First of all, I am not an attorney, but just an ordinary citizen who has great concern over the sound of industrial wind turbines invading neighboring properties.

The reason we have arrived at this point is because virtually every existing wind project in Vermont online has neighbors complaining about noise. If a new LOWER! sound standard is adopted, there will be less complaints. Therefore allowing the PSB more time to address other issues.

The current standard of 45 dB averaged over an hour is way too generous to the developers and operators of said projects. I have done some research and found that our neighboring states have sound standards that come nowhere near that level. For example: New Hampshire has a standard of "not to exceed" 45 db between the hours of 8 AM and 8 PM, and "not to exceed" 40 db at all other times. Any sound standard that is averaged over an hour is ridiculous in my opinion. This allows for unbearable noise for a good portion of the hour as long as it is quiet for the rest. This also allows for noise to go up-and-down, which lulls people into a false belief that it is ending, only to have it start back up again at a louder level, because it is a new hour starting. For example: I had a fan in my bedroom that I used at night when it's hot out. The fan ran at a constant noise level for five or ten minutes and then it would surge, only to die back down again. It did this over and over. Needless to say, I had to throw the fan away because we couldn't sleep with the inconsistent noise it was making. I can only imagine what that noise multiplied exponentially would be like. In addition to what I just mentioned, it's very difficult to determine if the project is in compliance if there is an average over an hour, rather than a maximum "not to exceed". I think a 42 db "not to exceed" between the hours of 7:00 am and 9:00 pm. And a "not to exceed" of 37 db for all other times is a fair compromise. To reiterate: The average of over an hour needs to be scrapped.

Sound standards also should be measured at the property line. Citizens should be allowed to enjoy their entire property, since they do pay taxes on it. Noise trespassing begins at the boundary, not just inside the dwelling.

There should also be strict monitoring of these projects, along with rigorous enforcement. Without monitoring and enforcement, those who run these projects will feel emboldened to not be in compliance, thereby creating more strife. After all, what good is a speed limit without police officers enforcing it?

I also believe that if a project is found to be out of compliance, there needs to be a penalty system that gets more punitive for every successive violation. Penalties need to be increasingly harsher for a project who ignores penalties for noise violations, because otherwise it will just be viewed as the cost of doing business.

I have seen testimony by an attorney representing a wind developer lamenting that it wouldn't be fair to change the rules now because his client has invested so much time and money trying to conceive a project under current standards. I have to disagree with that notion. Any commercial developer knows that there are potential changes in their plans and ideas for any given project. This is the risk they take to see their vision come to fruition. Example: The developer for the Burlington Town Center has had to alter his plans numerous times to comply with the will of the concerned parties, and probably will have to a few more times. Renewable energy producers should be no different. If we are going to keep on track with our goal of 90% by 2050, every one needs to work together, and to be respectful of the opposing point of view. This is a massive undertaking, and if people feel shut out of the process, with no input, the resistance and revolt will only get louder and stronger. There will be more fighting and finger pointing, with no real gains being made. So in closing, I plead with you to take into consideration the suggestions I have put forth in this letter.

Respectfully yours,
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