

NINA PIERPONT M.D. PH.D.



February 10, 2010

Rep. Tony Klein
Vermont State House of Representatives
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Representative Klein,

I am writing to express support for H.677, sponsored by Representative Potter and others, which (among other things) creates siting, setback, and noise requirements for industrial wind turbines in the good State of Vermont.

With increasing interest in building commercial-scale wind turbines in Vermont, it is imperative the Vermont legislature acts to ensure that these projects protect the health and safety of residents in communities where turbines are being proposed. As the saying goes, if you've got your health, you're okay. Conversely, if you don't, you're not okay.

H.677 provides reasonable, clinically and scientifically-based protections against noise, vibration, and shadow flicker from industrial turbines. As a physician who has intensively studied health impacts from turbine noise, vibration, and shadow flicker, I can provide ample documentation from people all over the world who have suffered because of turbines placed too close to where they live, work, and recreate. My research, along with that of others, is building a formidable body of scientific and clinical literature demonstrating the necessity of protections that are written into H.677—protections the wind industry steadfastly refuses to acknowledge.

The symptoms that people report follow a common pattern, or cluster, which I call "Wind Turbine Syndrome." These are the most prominent:

- sleep disturbance
- headache
- ringing or buzzing in the ears (tinnitus)
- ear pressure
- dizziness and vertigo
- nausea
- visual blurring
- racing heartbeat (tachycardia)
- irritability
- problems with concentration and memory
- panic episodes associated with sensations of internal pulsation or quivering, which arise while awake or asleep

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People suffering from these health effects were, in nearly all cases, supportive of these wind energy projects. Let me be clear on this. Moreover, they were assured that as the closest neighbors they would not experience any disturbance or illness. Of the 10 families (38 individuals) included in my “Wind Turbine Syndrome: A Report on a Natural Experiment” (Santa Fe, NM: K-Selected Books, 2009), 9 families have had to leave their homes, and the tenth has sued and is living in misery. Mind you, this is just the families in my report; I have since learned of numerous people, globally, who suffer from Wind Turbine Syndrome and are being forced to leave their homes. My phone and email in-box are loaded with these complaints.

Let me emphasize, people abandon their homes (as in, lock the door and leave) because they find them unlivable. I explain in 300 pages (see above) the likely pathophysiology of their illness, showing in detail that these unfortunates are not fabricating their illness—this is not something “psychosomatic”—but genuinely suffering from genuine, and genuinely serious illness. Whether the precise pathophysiological mechanism I lay out is correct or not, there is no serious dispute among medical doctors that these people suffer from bona fide and serious illness—and that its cause is the wind turbines, and that this constellation of illness disappears when these people remove themselves from the vicinity of the turbines. I repeat, there is no serious clinical dispute about this.

A few have been “lucky” enough to be bought out by the offending wind company which, then, has them sign a gag agreement not to discuss publicly their case. The rest must suffer with the additional insult of official denial and even contempt.

This needs to stop. It can be stopped by adequate setbacks and noise limits as specified in H.677.

I urge the House Natural Resources and Energy Committee to schedule hearings on the bill this year.

I am willing to testify (depending on my schedule, either in person, by teleconference, web camera, or in writing) about the scientific and clinical evidence behind my support of H.677.

Sincerely,



Nina Pierpont, MD, PhD, FAAP
Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Co-signed by the following (signatures added digitally, with permission):



George Kamperman, P.E.
President, Kamperman Associates, Inc.
Bd. Cert. Member Institute of Noise Control Engineers
Fellow Member Acoustical Society of America
Member National Council of Acoustical Consultants

F. Owen Black, MD

*F. Owen Black, MD, FACS
Board Certified Otolaryngologist
Senior Scientist
Director of Neurotology Research
Balance & Hearing Center North West
Legacy Health System
Portland, OR

* “Dr. Black is an internationally known neurotologist and human vestibular physiologist. He has received continuous funding from the NIH and NASA for his research for over 20 years. Dr. Black’s research focuses on disorders of the human vestibular system and the effects of microgravity on human postural control, with a major emphasis on the role played by otolith function. A component of his work is investigating how visual cues, which the brain receives from the eyes, work with the inner ear to help control balance. His NASA-funded research involves the impact that the zero gravity of space has on astronaut balance control. He regularly travels to the JohnsonSpace Center in Houston and the Kennedy Space Center in Florida to meet with his NASA collaborators, and serves on the medical advisory team for the space shuttle program. These studies are leading to a further understanding of the human vestibular system and its role in spatial orientation, equilibrium, balance, and debilitating disorders such as motion sickness that will lead to new diagnostic and therapeutic methods” (from Dr. Black’s resumé).

Joel F. Lehrer, MD

Joel F. Lehrer, M.D. FACS
Board Certified Otolaryngologist and Head and Neck Surgeon
Served on Hearing and Equilibrium Subcommittee of the American Academy of Otolaryngology and Head and Neck Surgery
Clinical Professor of Otolaryngology, Univ of Med & Dentistry of NJ (UMDNJ)
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Stanley M. Shapiro, MD

*Stanley M. Shapiro, MD, FACC
Fellow of the American College of Cardiology
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*Dr. Shapiro was asked to join this list of signatories because of his expertise in the cardiac aspects of sleep deprivation, one of the most prominent symptoms of Wind Turbine Syndrome.