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Australian Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra

Dear Prime Minister,

It is reassuring that Senator Cameron has stated the Government will be “guided by the science” in his speech to the Australian Federal Senate on 29th November, 2012 discussing proposed legislation to improve the regulation of excessive noise from wind turbines.

However, to be “guided by the science”, the science needs to be done.

Urgent research was recommended by the Senate Inquiry report into the Social and Economic Impact of rural wind farms, tabled in Federal Parliament in June 2011. To my knowledge, no multidisciplinary research independent of industry has been funded or commissioned.

These serious problems need to be investigated by studying the reported symptoms in the people reporting them, inside their homes and workplaces where the problems are occurring. This will not be achieved by a laboratory based study of unaffected people. Nor will it be achieved by yet another National Health and Medical Research Council literature review.

The most common reported problem is repetitive sleep disturbance, resulting in cumulative sleep deprivation, which is well known to be damaging to health. Submissions to the recent Senate Inquiry into Excessive Noise from Wind Farms from two sleep physicians Dr Chris Hanning (UK) and Dr Wayne Spring, (Ballarat) confirmed the existence of sleep problems in residents living near wind developments, as did submissions from residents, two peer reviewed published research papers, and recently conducted research in Victoria by Dr Bob Thorne.

The public health advocates of renewable energy, including some doctors, who are using the diagnosis of “nocebo reaction” in this circumstance, and inferring it is **the cause** of the reported symptoms in people exposed to operating wind turbines, have not based their conclusions on either their own clinical assessments, or reports from treating health practitioners such as Dr Wayne Spring (sleep physician) or Mr Peter Trask (Psychologist). Nor are they basing their “nocebo diagnosis” on acoustic and physiological clinical research data collected from inside the homes of sick rural residents, as this has not yet occurred. Residents and advocates impacted by noise from compressors (CSG and gas fired power stations) and mining have also indicated that their reports of associated serious pathology have also been ignored by these public health officials, and their identical serious health problems remain uninvestigated and unacknowledged.

There is no doubt there is growing concern, and indeed anger, in an increasing number of rural communities about the inaction of all responsible authorities and the denial of adverse health impacts of noise and vibration pollution from wind turbines and other industrial sources such as compressors used in coal seam gas, gas fired power stations and coal mining. Your government is directly responsible for that growing concern, because of ongoing inaction with respect to commissioning industry independent multidisciplinary research to investigate these environmental noise problems and their impacts, "in the field".

Your government, and the Australian Federal Parliament, has a responsibility to protect the health of its citizens, and **more importantly it has a responsibility not to harm them.**

Some of this harm to human health is potentially life threatening, specifically a range of cardiac disorders including unusual Tako Tsubo Heart attacks, and serious mental health problems including severe depression. Some rural residents have become suicidal, if they cannot get away.

I call on you, as Prime Minister, as a matter of public safety, to immediately allocate specific funding for independent researchers, with no connection to industry, to start this research with a study of the **repetitive sleep disturbance and physiological stress symptoms** which these residents are reporting, especially where they are "**waking suddenly in a panicked state**". Such a study requires the collection of full spectrum acoustic data, concurrent with physiological data from "in home" sleep studies, non invasive blood pressure and heart rate recording, and sequential cortisol analysis.

Action to commission the multidisciplinary acoustic and clinical research, into the reported **sleep and physiological stress problems, and the damaging consequences for physical and mental health**, is long overdue. The recommendation for urgent research by the Senate Inquiry report into the Social and Economic Impact of rural wind farms, tabled in Federal Parliament in June 2011 can no longer be ignored.

Yours faithfully



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