

Presentation to Grey/Bruce Health Unit Board and Dr. Hazel Lynn

A community's distress over communal symptoms

Presented by:

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September 21, 2012

Doctor Hazel Lynn, Ms. Wright and Board Members,

I come before you today with the consent and on behalf of several families, including my own, which dwell in southern Grey Highlands, Grey County in the areas of Maxwell and Hatherton. The area is comprised mostly of farm land and small residential enclaves.

I will also be speaking about a family who resides just south of the Melancthon – Artemesia Town Line in Melancthon, Duffrin County. The reason for this inclusion is their complaints were referred by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) district office in Guelph to the MOE Owen Sound District office.

Around the early part of 2012, people in the area began to notice certain symptoms that were affecting their health. It soon became apparent that we were indicating common problems, such as interrupted sleep, sleeplessness, heart palpitations, headaches, nausea, ringing in the ears, pressure in the head and ears, a tingling or vibrating feeling in the limbs and torso, dizziness, nose bleeds, lack of energy, depression, irritability, and anger.

While we do not claim to understand the nature or cause of these symptoms, the common denominator for us all is that we reside less than 1,500 meters of the Plateau Wind Project turbines which began operation in February 2012. In some cases the noise levels are so extreme as to cause the sufferers sleep disruption and/or sleeplessness.

We are looking to you, the experts and professionals charged with the protection of our health to determine what the cause or causes are of the symptoms we are presenting and to eliminate and prevent any further harm.

Several people have filed complaints to the Ministry of the Environment Spills Action Hot Line and to the MOE Owen Sound Office. In addition some have contacted the Plateau Wind Inc. Company with the encouragement of the MOE. The MOE's role is one of ensuring compliance with the wind company's Certificate of Approval.

Any information given to the MOE is then logged into the Ministry's data system, an incident report number is provided only when requested and the company is notified of the location and nature of the complaint. It is the responsibility of the company to abate impacts relating to wind turbines that generate complaints. In order to be able to verify

that our complaints are recorded properly or that the company has been notified or what action is being taken we are required to file a freedom of information request (FOI). After enlisting the aid of a legal advisor I was able to obtain the MOE officer's notes taken during her visit to my home but with the caveat that any further requests for my own statements would necessitate an FOI.

The **MOE Protocol Compliance for wind turbine Noise: Part A: A2** states
“Complaints about wind turbine noise in the infrasound or ultrasound ranges (i.e. outside the normal audio range), transformer substation noise, and other issues such as shadow flicker or health effects are beyond the scope of this document.”

Part C: C2.3.2 of the **MOE Protocol for Wind Turbine Noise** recommends that measurements be performed during lowest background noise conditions. This period of time is normally in the *late evening or night time* (the emphasis is mine). **C3** speaks to acoustic recordings made by the resident/complainant: This approach may be utilized when it is not possible for ministry staff to make attended observations or measurements at a resident's home during periods when a resident deems wind turbine noise disturbing. The procedure involves installing a special sound recording system/device at a resident's home to collect between three to nine, 10 minute recordings of the offending noise at the exact time of the occurrence.

The above information is relevant to the experience we have had with the MOE and the developer. As you will hear our complaints either fall outside the scope of the MOE's protocol, or they are not being addressed according to the MOE's protocol. Many of us have witnessed the MOE officer from the Owen Sound District office taking noise measurements near our homes in the middle of the day when the turbines are not turning and the wind is not blowing.

You have before you statements from affected individuals and families that I will summarize in consideration of the time permitted me today. I urge you to familiarize yourself with the struggles of their plight. There are others who have shared the stories of their suffering but choose to remain silent for fear of further humiliation and frustration over the lack of response or mitigation to their complaints. To date not one person who has filed a complaint has been contacted by the developer. The MOE has done nothing to investigate. Some have given up reporting and recording the effects of their complaints because it “doesn't do any good”; they barely have the energy or will to do so anymore.

There is a young man in our community who was vibrant and active, dynamic in his job, now he misses days from work because he cannot bring himself to get out of bed in the morning after a restless night to make the long commute required to get to his place of employment.

A young father who suffers from vertigo which has now become more pronounced since the turbines began to operate , is now having what he describes as heart problems and his

doctor is now recommending a pace maker, The man is 35 years old. This family feels they have no choice and are making plans to leave their home.

A mother and daughter in another family have begun suffering from migraine headaches and nose bleeds. A woman suffers from sharp pains in her head, pressure and ringing in her ears. She does not hear any turbine noise in her home. A two year old child holds her hands to her ears and say's "my ears hurt" when she comes to visit her grandparents, this does not occur when she is at home in Collingwood.

Others describe their living conditions as "living in hell". Nonetheless we are all living day to day trying to cope with the impact on our health, that of the children's and worrying about how to escape an intolerable nightmare.

The following is the story of another family who has made the decision to leave their home. This is not a decision that was made lightly but with the excruciating realization that their health means more to them that the home and community they have loved and lived in since 1989.

"Shortly after the turbines started my wife and I began to experience dizziness, depression, high blood pressure, ringing in the ears, and sleep disruption. Our grandson, who is 2 years old stays overnight once or twice a week, has experienced a severe nose bleed which covered his pillow and blankets in blood. He does not have a history of nose bleeds. He has always been a good sleeper, but recently when he stays the night he wakes up crying. He does not do this at home. His bedroom in our home is closest to the wind turbines.

My wife now has high blood pressure, dizziness, and depression, which subsided when she left for a couple of weeks. When the noise is extreme I find myself in a position that I can not think or function. I've also been having rapid pulse shortly after the turbine started. I lack energy and I am depressed and I do not even want to go home any more to my home which I've resided at since 1989. I can not sleep any more; it is effecting how I perform at work as I am tired from lack off sleep. I have lost my will to be an outdoors person; we just don't go outside anymore.

I have had the MOE at my home 3 times to monitor noise from turbines. The first MOE officer that did the monitoring told me I live between a rock and a hard place because of my location on Hwy 10 and turbine noise coming from an area out of their jurisdiction.

I was also told that the turbine could be as loud as any background noise no matter how loud this might be. I have since had MOE from Owen Sound come out and monitor turbine noise at times of very low winds. I was told by the responding MOE officer that she would just be monitoring traffic noise at 6:00 pm and 8:30pm. I tried to make her aware that traffic noise stops during the night and the turbines don't. She informed me that she doesn't work at these hours even though the MOE recommends measurements are performed late in the evening or night time. If I were to make this kind of noise all night long I would be arrested. Winds from north or south are when noise is unbearable. I

live in an area of a lot of trees and noise is trapped in here and not filtered out as we are led to believe.

We are so desperate to regain our health that we are close to walking away from our home. How could we possibly sell this house to another family knowing that we are becoming ill from turbines?"

We are all familiar with the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health's Report. We are also aware of the University of Waterloo research in renewable energy technologies and health which will be concluded in five years. The Health Canada study recently announced will be completed in two years.

We cannot continue to suffer for two years or five years waiting to get a diagnosis for our symptoms. Each day is an eternity when our health is impacted, when we have little sleep, when our livelihoods and our way of life have deteriorated. Something is causing us to have the symptoms that I have described to you.

We are looking to The Grey/Bruce Health Unit Board charged with the responsibility to protect the health of the citizens of Grey and Bruce Counties to determine the cause of our suffering and to prescribe a remedy for us to follow. We are requesting that you launch an investigation into the possibility that a health hazard exists in Grey Highlands and follow up on your findings and restore our health to us.

Casualties #'s 1, 2, 3

To the Grey/Bruce Health Unit Board,

My name is A.F. I live in the township of Melancthon, near the Melancthon – Artemesea Town Line. This is an official complaint and I would like it to be public record.

Shortly after the turbines started my wife and I began to experience dizziness, depression, high blood pressure, ringing in the ears, and sleep disruption. Our grandson, who is 2 years old stays overnight once or twice a week, has experienced a severe nose bleed which covered his pillow and blankets in blood. He does not have a history of nose bleeds. He has always been a good sleeper, but recently when he stays the night he wakes up crying. He does not do this at home. His bedroom in our home is closest to the wind turbines.

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We are so desperate to regain our health that we are close to walking away from our home. How could we possibly sell this house to another family knowing that we are becoming ill from turbines?

Regards,

A.F and S.M.

Casualty # 4

My story...

I moved to grey bruce to get away from noise that was not letting me sleep through the night-cars racing down the nearby (30M) main street in Brampton. When I moved into my current house, I noticed a huge improvement in my sleep and therefore my energy during the day. When the IWT were put online, I noticed a decline in my sleep and therefore my daytime energy. My boss has noticed a huge difference in me since about march when the IWTs had been running for weeks on end.

I have taken sick days to sleep, I am late once or more a week. I have fallen asleep at my desk, or in the washroom.

I yawn throughout the day. I am moody, short tempered, and lethargic. My boss knows what the cause is, since this all magically happened about the time the IWTs were put online.

I have called the MOE to complain the few times I could hear them through my pillow.

I stayed at my parents over the long weekend, I was in a single bed that is at least 25 years old. I had a sore back, I know I woke up many times during the night to get comfortable. The thing is, I felt like a million dollars the next day...even with a sore back....because I got a proper restful sleep...of some sort....which I am currently not used to. The day following that, I stayed in a room at my grandpas. This bed is 50+ years old, I slept amazing, I was astonished. I had 6 hours of driving after that and did not feel tired at all.

I really wish...if i could only make one wish....that the IWTs near my home were turned off at night, when they cause the most harm to the people trying to sleep.

Regards

N.M.

Casualties # 5, 6

My family and I are extremely disappointed that the Ontario Government failed to conduct a community health study prior to the installation of the wind turbines near my home.

My wife and daughter are experiencing migraine headaches, insomnia, and nosebleeds. We believe these ailments are related to the wind turbines near my home.

These ailments did not occur prior to the turbine installation.

Please include this letter at the meeting and as part of the public record.

Thank you,

J.D.

Casualty #7

D.K.
Grey Highlands
Aug. 6,2012

To Whom it may concern,
This used to be a great place to live! Peaceful and quiet. Now it seems like living in a WASHING MACHINE! You can't sit outside after dark due to the constant noise on breezy nights. I have six wind turbines all around my house. The noise even comes through your pillows at night! Can't sleep due to the constant noise, and this is affecting my job performance! I have to close all my windows on nice summer nights to try to STOP the DARN NOISE! I have buzzing in my ears and lots of sleepless nights. Also the flicker effect, in the early evening bombards my house.

These windmills are bothering my whole family. People who say that these are great should stop and try to get an understanding of what we are going through.

HELL!!!!!!

We have had people from down south (Brampton/ Toronto) who ask " How the Hell can you live here?"

Well, we can't move /sell our house because, who in their right mind would buy around this area? This home was my retirement place to live, now I'm out property value. Thanks a lot!

People who write in the papers that there are NO problems with the windmills , should stop by and stay a while. NOT JUST INTERVIEW FOR TEN MINUTES!!

It's disgusting how the people, who have these wind turbines on their land say they have no problem with them, when they are closer than us! It's a GAG order!

I know of people who have these and wish they never installed them! They have lost friends, neighbors and use of other farms, because of their money-hungry ways! The pay-off is a complete joke!

In closing SHUT THESE OFF, UNTIL A STUDY IS DONE! Let us get back to the way country living is supposed to be. QUIET and PEACEFUL!

Yours Truly,
D.K.

Casualty #8

L.B.

Grey Highlands

To Whom it may concern,

This letter is concerning the health effects and noise of the wind turbines, or the non-existing health effects, according to the experts doing the so called "studies." I have lived in this area for many years enjoying the peaceful country life and when I heard of the wind turbines coming into my backyard, I was very upset. We tried stopping this project but, of course, did not succeed. It was apparent that big business and money meant more than the concerns of the area residents. So in come the turbines.

I have six turbines around me, ranging from 700 metres to 1500 metres away from my house. Oh, and to mention they were all up before the election last October. Coincidence? I don't think so. The turbines started running in February of this year. In my mind I thought, okay, they are here, but they probably won't bother me health wise, even though I had read about the

health issues concerning the wind turbines.

I was fine for the first two to three weeks. I thought, hey I'm one of the lucky ones, but things then changed. In March of this year I started to experience sleepless nights, ringing and pressure in my ears as well as pressure in my temples. This continued on non-stop and if this is living Hell, well then welcome. The noise from these giant windmills is horrific. With them, brings a flicker effect through the house every night when the sun is going down. We have to close our windows and blinds to keep that flicker effect as well as the noise down. Nice way to have to live, huh? In the evenings, to sit outside is NOT enjoyable. Instead of listening to the peacefulness we once had, we now have to endure what sounds like a 400 series highway in our back yard. The people doing these so-called health studies for wind turbines obviously do NOT have to live near them. The wind turbines are effecting my health as well as my livelihood. Thanks, thank you very much.

Anyone who believes that the wind turbines do not have any ill-effects, come and live in my world, that way you can really experience what it is like, and let me reassure you that it is NOT pleasant, and should NOT have to be bared by the people in this community.

Sincerely,

L.B.

Casualty # 9

I am giving Virginia Stewart Love permission to share the following info. with the Grey Bruce Health Unit and with Dr. Hazel Lynn:

1. Health-- I have been having intense pressure in the head and ears, as if someone were forcing air into my ears beyond the volume-capacity of the inner ear. Additionally, I have experienced extreme heart palpitations, whereby it feels like one might not be able to breathe.

I was not impacted by these symptoms prior to the date the turbines started operating.

2. Noise-- The pounding and shrieking noise of the 9 turbines behind my house make walking and kayaking on the property (186 Acres) a distinct Non-pleasure.

3. Symptoms began after Feb. 2012.

It is undemocratic and legally questionable that I cannot enjoy my property nor have normal good health because these turbines have been forced on me, for the benefit of foreign countries' corporations.

L.P.

Casualties # 10, 11, 12

My name is M.G., I reside at 267093 South Line B RR#2 Proton Station, Grey Highlands, On N0C 1L0.

I have been experiencing dizziness, headaches, once even shooting pains in my head as if something were piercing my skull, head and ear pressure as though I am descending rapidly in an airplane, and ringing in my ears. I have loose bowels, pounding in my chest and on occasion I have had vibrations within my body while lying in bed which become difficult to tolerate. I am awoken in the middle of the night experiencing one or more of these symptoms. Many times I feel some of these effects in the day time.

I began to notice some of these symptoms while on my daily walk towards the end of February 2012 after an array of industrial wind turbines began operation. As I experienced more events I began to record them along with the Environment Canada weather conditions of the day in a day planner. Soon it was evident that there was something amiss. I placed my first call to the MOE spills action hotline on Tuesday April 17th. This was the beginning of many complaints filed to either the Spills Action Center or to the Owen Sound District Office in Owen Sound. On April 27th we had a visit from the MOE Owen Sound district Office. I have included my recap of the meeting with this document.

I had to enlist the aid of a legal advisor to attain my own statement to the Owen Sound District Officer's report without a freedom of information request. The District Manager's response to my request was demining and condescending, full of platitudes as to how there is no scientific evidence that demonstrates that I am being impacted by low frequency noise or vibration from industrial wind turbines. He encourages me however to continue to call Spills Action Center when I feel I am experiencing noise impacts so that the ministry can respond appropriately. In all the time I have reported my complaints I have never felt that the MOE has responded at all. For that matter neither has the Plateau Wind Farm Company.

I am aware of one other occasion that the MOE officer came to my area. She informed me that she was here to take noise measurements. She set up across the road from our home on a day that was not windy and the turbines were not turning.

My Daughter who has been home from University began to experience ear pain and sleeplessness shortly after her arrival. When she said to me that she thought that she might have caught her dog's ear infection, I became alarmed.

My two year old granddaughter has complained of her ears hurting as she puts her hands to the side of her head. She does no such thing when she is at home in Collingwood.

Our family and our home has always been the center of our lives. It is our sanctuary and the place where we all come together. I fear for the well being of my children, their spouses, my grandchildren, and anyone else who comes to stay for an extended visit. I cannot abide that they would experience for one moment what I am suffering.

I have become disillusioned and less ridged in my reports (ie. time and weather conditions etc.) and make them via email so as to have a written document of my complaints. Life has become exhausting. I find myself being forgetful about plans or obligations that have been made and even the loss of my words. I no longer take daily walks as I am fearful of walking to close to the turbines. This is no way to live.

M.G.

Casualties # 13, 14

Grey Bruce Health Unit Board

Tues. Sept. 18, 2012

We are F.R. and T.P. living on a (productive) 100 acre farm within the Maxwell-Hatherton wind project.

We are supporters of renewable energy and initially supported wind development. The manner in which Industrial Wind Turbines (I.W.T) are being sited and forced into rural Ontario (eg. Plateau -Grey Highlands) has changed our perspective. We do not support I.W.T. being sited 550 metres from the centre of homes. This has resulted in the health of some receptors being negatively impacted. Renewable energy must be implemented in a safe and socially acceptable manner.

It is wrong to saturate areas of rural Ontario (where families are living). The accumulative (noise)effect increases as the number,size and density of turbines increases.

This letter will focus on health impacts and reasons for a request for assistance from Doctor Hazel Lynn and the Grey-Bruce Health Unit Board.

I was born in Toronto and have lived on South Kingsway and in Willowdale,Agincourt, Scarborough and Brampton. My husband has lived near and in Brampton before moving to Grey Highlands.

We have experienced all the noise (traffic, neighbors, sirens etc.) that living in an urban centre entails. It is very different from living in an almost, quiet rural setting.

It is totally different from living near or in an industrial turbine array!

Do not call a turbine array a wind farm. Call it-- what it is --an INDUSTRIAL SITE!.

The extent to which I.W.T. permeates your life, has to be personally experienced (over a period of time) to fully understand it. The best descriptive word to apply to audible wind turbine noise is "INCONSISTANT".

Stress is part of everyday life-- but prolonged stress can compromise the status of one's health!

We consider ourselves to be negatively impacted by I.W.T. in the following ways:

1. Social Fabric of the Community:

-anger/stress is percolating within the community.
- the health of a rural community depends on consideration and support for neighbours.

2. Audible Noise:

-we have never used air-conditioning (to conserve energy-cost)-- but would open windows to cross- ventilate. During hot,humid nights (with the turbines running) we kept our windows closed.

There are three types of audible "cyclic" noise.

a. a jet flying constantly overhead.

b. a mechanical screech

c. whoosh-whoosh-whoosh-whoosh-whoosh-whoosh-whoosh etc.

This noise is definitely different from a running refrigerator or a vacuum cleaner--- especially when you can't turn them off!

Computer modeling cannot adequately calibrate the impact experience of this audible noise.

Can levels and variations in low-frequency noise be measured and monitored?

This is important!

What will be the long-term affects of audible and inaudible noise ?

3. Decrease in the enjoyment of our property.

4. Some neighbors are suffering health effects-- that were not present before the turbines started generating.

We repeat the request for an investigation into the health impacts of constituents living within the Maxwell- Hatherton wind project. Residents are being impacted (some more so than others).

Please place this letter in the Public Record. Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this letter.

Sincerely,

F.R. and T.P.

“what one permits ---- one condones”