22 November 2012

Dr Ian Holland
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Parliament House
ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for your recent correspondence and for providing submissions mentioning Pacific Hydro which have been made to the Standing Committee on Environment and Communication in relation to the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill (Excessive noise from wind farms) 2012 Bill.

Pacific Hydro takes all complaints from community members seriously. We have a thorough complaints process which investigates concerns thoroughly, aiming to resolve issues raised.

While we have a policy of not discussing complaint details with anyone other than the complainant, in light of some of the submissions received we would comment generally that some complaints are challenging to resolve.

As a wind farm owner and operator, we have to rely on the advice of Government bodies and well respected organisations, such as the NHMRC for health related matters. Those bodies advise there is insufficient evidence of health effects from wind farms. Where there are gaps in knowledge we, where practical, will perform testing in an attempt to fill those gaps. For example, we have conducted infrasound testing at two of our wind farms as well as other manmade and natural sources and found levels of infrasound at the wind farms to be well below the World Health Organisation hearing threshold and significantly lower than at the beach.

We can also advise that we have received complaints allegedly caused by our wind farms which, in our view, are unreasonable complaints for us to resolve. For example, we have had complaints which include increased mosquitos in the area and another where it is alleged an earth tremor was caused by the wind farm. We have also had a complaint about significant noise and health impacts from one of our wind farms while it was shut down for maintenance for an extended period.

We would be happy to provide further details about our complaints handling procedure should it be required.

Sincerely,

Lane Crockett

General Manager, Australia
Pacific Hydro Australia

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