

From:
To: [Committee, EC \(SEN\)](#)
Subject: Spam: RENEWABLE ENERGY (ELECTRICITY) AMENDMENT (EXCESSIVE NOISE FROM WIND FARMS) BILL 2012.
Date: Wednesday, 31 October 2012 10:45:07 PM

We support the amendments to the Renewable Energy Act proposed by Senators Xenophon and Madigan. My husband and I have been severely impacted upon by, for the last nearly three years, by noise from merely construction of the Macarthur wind farm in south-west Victoria, and since operation began around the beginning of October we are now experiencing a detrimental impact upon our health and well being by low frequency noise and infrasound, both inside and outside our home.

I am quite willing to give evidence in person should this necessity arise.

We own a small adjoining property to the 140 turbine Macarthur wind farm of 3 megawatts. Until May 2012, we operated a most successful ultra-fine shedded sheep wool-growing enterprise, which we began in 2000.

From the moment we were first notified of the prospect of the Southern Hemisphere's largest wind farm, with turbines proposed far too close to our farm boundary, we were fearful of the detrimental impact of the low frequency noise on our own health and that of our finely bred ultra-fine merino sheep which such a highly sensitive nervous system.

For this reason we presented a very comprehensive submission to the panel for the Macarthur wind farm in 2006 but were bullied and howled down by AGL and their legal representative. AGL flew out from the United Kingdom a supposed expert who attempted to squash our claims that our specialist sheep would be impacted upon. We were told by AGL that the noise "would be no greater than any ordinary working farm" and were also told that the nearest turbine to our property boundary would be 130 metres.

Since October 2011, in particular, we have been severely impacted upon by the noise of construction in addition to dust from the wind farm site next door. After my constant complaints about horrific noise, sometimes nearly daily, a senior AGL executive from Sydney came to meet with us and assured us that the impact from noise and dust would be minimised from then on. Unfortunately, it got WORSE. Unfortunately that assurance could not have been further from reality. The noise during December 2011 was unbelievable, on at least one occasion beginning before 7.00am which is the law according to the Environment Protection Authority of Victoria. The noise affected our animals in the paddock and the ultra-fine shed, but also affected our amenity at our home to a great extent.

However, nothing could have prepared us for the horrific noise from construction we

were forced to endure from February 2012, when AGL decided to locate a rock crushing plant several hundred metres from our southern boundary. For weeks we were belted by the constant horrific noise of hundreds of dump trucks bringing large rocks from all over the wind farm site to this rock crushing plant, dumping them for crushing which in itself would be a massive operation. Our sheep in the paddocks were constantly frightened, but the most severe impact was on the shedded sheep as the noise resonated within the walls of their shed, forcing them to constantly take fright and disturbing their eating patterns, with the final result that they literally stopped eating and died.

The constant noise for many weeks, in fact months, severely affected our ability to function normally. As if the thunderous noise from the jackhammers and excavating equipment wasn't enough !!! The noise and vibration from excavation and the rock crushing plant was just unbearable. It was like living in a war zone. The dumping of the huge boulders into the crushing plant was like bombs going off and the jackhammers were like machine guns constantly firing. I have comprehensive records of possibly about 30 emails to AGL requesting they stop this madness as the noise was just driving us and our animals mad. I recall on one Saturday morning ringing their consultant in tears, desperately pleading with him to have the noise stopped. But to no avail.

AGL on 14th December 2011 offered a noise monitor near our house and sheds, but despite my constant requests, they didn't carry out this offer despite several requests. Of course any noise monitor would have far exceeded the acceptable decibel level at our home. However, we did notice that after the rock crushing exercise ceased, AGL did install a noise monitor near our boundary fence, but this was after the "horse had bolted".

As a result the 400 sheep in our purpose built sheep shed were driven mad by the noise and vibrations which resonated within the walls of their shed constantly. By May 2012 their health had deteriorated to such an extent that they began to die due to the constant disturbance from noise and vibration, in addition to contamination of their drinking water by dust, so we had to make a decision to cease this enterprise. We had just reached the pinnacle of our career in September 2011 when we were awarded second prize in the prestigious Zegna of Italy award for the finest fleece in the world. This achievement was as a result of 30 years of specialist breeding and we were the first Victorian individuals to receive this highly coveted award. So having literally "got to the top" in the world, we had to let the sheep out of the shed, literally nurse them back to some semblance of health and truck them off to the butchers as past experience is that any sheep whose health is affected in any way, does not ever recover from that setback.

We are unable to resume this enterprise for nearly ten years, as we've sold literally the finest genetics in the world which it has taken 30 years to breed. One cannot buy

sheep of such fine micron and specialist constitution in the market.

This most lucrative wool-growing enterprise comprised 80% of our income. Our annual income from this enterprise is around \$100,000 and sometimes up to \$200,000. Ten years lost, as explained in the previous paragraph results in loss of income between \$1 million to \$2 million. So we have been left floundering with a very small farm which is not large enough to make a living from. The effect on our health during this time was very damaging. The stress has certainly taken its toll on our health, both from the physical impact of the noise and the worry for our animals and our future.

The noise we have experienced over the last three years, in particular 2011 and 2012, has been of a highly audible nature, in addition to vibration within the walls of our house and our farm sheds.

However, at the beginning of October, AGL commenced operation of several wind turbines. This number has been gradually increasing and is currently, I am told by neighbours, at around 50 turbines in operation in the middle of the wind farm, leaving around 90 turbines still to be commissioned.

For the first week, when the wind was in the west, we did not experience any effects whatsoever. However, the following week when the wind had turned to the south and south-east I began experiencing effects from the low frequency noise, or infrasound obviously in our home. For the first two weeks since 10th October 2012, I have constantly felt nauseous all day. It doesn't matter whether I am inside the house or outside, it never goes away. In addition to the nausea, I feel intense pressure in my head, between my eyes, behind my ears and across my forehead. My ears are constantly popping and I often feel a racing and thumping of my heart beat.

These turbines would be at least 3 to 4 kilometres from our home. We shudder to think what the impact will be on our health and well being, when the much closer turbines begin operation if I am suffering constant nausea and head pressure so far.

So far, we have not experienced significant sleep disturbance, but fear this will be the case when all of the massive 140 turbines are fully operational.

However, in the morning I have to get out of bed as soon as I wake up which is pretty early, just after the birds start singing, as I can feel my pillow vibrating on the bed. I can't stand lying there with that experience, so to this extent am already suffering reduced sleep to that which I used to enjoy.

When I go out into the paddocks closer to the turbines, the pressure in my head becomes much more intense and I sense a constant ringing in my ears. This doesn't ever go away unless I leave the property and go to town. Ten days ago I had a health check up with our family doctor in Hamilton. He enquired after my health and I

reported my constant nausea to him since the turbines began operation. He said only two words to me in reply and they were "LOW FREQUENCY NOISE". He had obviously been reading up on the possible health impacts of wind turbines, but in particular was fully aware of the impact of low frequency noise.

It appears to me that it doesn't matter what the weather conditions are, whether it's windy or calm, the constant nausea and head pressure, heart thumping is always there. I often feel a twinging in my lips and sometimes I feel as my body is electrified. My husband and I are keeping a comprehensive diary of any experiences we have had since the wind farm began operation, be it health impacts or peculiarities we haven't experienced before in our own day to day activities, in addition to the behaviour of our paddock animals.

On the 23rd October, my husband and I went on a holiday, our first in eight years. We arrived home on the evening of 30th October 2012. The 24th of October was the first day since 10th October when I had not felt nauseous and experienced extreme head pressure. We were able to enjoy seven days away from our home but when we arrived home at night on 30th October, the ear and head pressure returned. Today, my first day at home, has been spent feeling constantly nauseous again. The pressure in my ears and in my head in general has returned, as has the rapid thump of my heart.

We wonder how we will be able to live on our property and continue working in our paddocks, particularly if I have been impacted upon with only a small portion of turbines operating. We have 140 turbines within 5 kilometres of our home, but worse still the closest turbine to our paddock boundary is 90 METRES !!! We have another 7 turbines within 1.7 to 1.8 kms from our home and several not much further than the closest at 90 metres.

Last year during construction as my husband and I were riding motor bikes through our paddocks, mustering sheep we experienced such horrific noise, that we nearly fell off our motor bikes. We live in rocky country and certainly fear with the constant noise disturbance by our far too close proximity to turbines it will only be time before a serious accident happens.

As yet, I have not put in a formal complaint about the impact of noise on my health, merely due to lack of time. However I shall be putting a formal complaint in shortly. I know of others who have complained to AGL directly in writing. One lady who lives more than 3 kms from the nearest operating turbine, and has experienced severe impacts thus far, has complained, and the AGL employee literally sent her a whole lot of propaganda, of which one report was that of the NHMRC stating there is no known link between wind turbine noise and health.

We have had AGL senior management people stand in our kitchen telling us that only those people who have a preconceived idea they'll be affected by turbine noise, are

actually impacted upon. That is, it's all in our heads.

We fully support the amendments proposed by Senators Madigan and Xenophon to the Renewable Energy Act. If there is excessive noise which is harming people's health, the government subsidy to wind farm developers, the Renewable Energy Certificates SHOULD NOT BE PAID to any NOISE POLLUTERS.

There should be full spectrum noise monitoring in people's homes, ie. not only audible noise but low frequency noise and infrasound which cannot be heard at all. The Government needs to take this potentially extreme impact on people's health very seriously. There are more than 200 families living within 9 kilometres of this massive Macarthur wind farm and as the new V112 turbines used for the first time here, are literally untested, the outcome for this and other wind farms proposed, should these amendments not be implemented, will be devastating.

NOBODY should have to live with the impact of audible and inaudible noise in addition to vibration in their homes, their farm sheds or their paddocks, which are our workplaces.

We certainly are not looking forward to the impact of 140 turbines and we do not want to have to leave our home, in order that AGL and our greedy neighbours may maximise their profits, at the cost of our health.

ANNIE and ANDREW GARDNER