

**From:**  
**To:** [Committee, EC \(SEN\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Madigan, John \(Private\)](#)  
**Subject:** In Support of Amendments to REA  
**Date:** Friday, 2 November 2012 2:27:33 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to support the proposed amendments to the Renewable Energy Act. Our community has recently been involved in a proposal for an industrial wind facility in our heritage-listed Trawool Valley. Concerned about excessive noise and the potential adverse health affects as a result of infrasound, low frequency sound and vibration, our community organised an information session in August 2012. We invited some members of other wind facilities close by and two residents from the Waubra area attended. They recounted their experience of living in close proximity to a wind energy facility and also of their belief that it was creating excessive noise and that the complaints procedure was ineffective and deficient to adequately address their countless concerns. Their stories made it very clear to our community that once wind facilities are installed there appears to be no accountability on the part of the wind energy company with regard to excessive noise complaints. It was for this reason that our community felt it prudent, at significant expense to ourselves (\$4,500), to commission a peer-review of the proponent's acoustic report.

Our report, prepared by the most experienced acoustic expert in the country, found that the proponents report was inadequate in many aspects. He felt that the actual acoustic impact on the community had not been addressed as it had relied solely upon the NZ Standard and had ignored the acoustic characteristics that our residents would be impacted by. The noise generated by the wind facility was deemed to be significantly greater than background noise and hence would be significantly greater than for "annoyance". The proponents report and the NZ Standard upon which it relied, were found to ignore infrasound and low frequency sound and that a proper assessment of "community impacts" must not exclude these essential elements. Furthermore, it noted that in South Australia the "guidelines" identified sleep disturbance as an adverse health effect for host stakeholders and therefore concludes that sleep disturbance MUST also impact the general community also living in close proximity to industrial wind turbines. It was very clear from our report that the A-Weighted value used for noise or compliance by wind industry acousticians does not address all of the noise impacts associated with industrial wind facilities.

Further to the points raised in the peer-review of the proponents acoustic report, we believe that the topography and meteorological conditions of this unique Goulburn River valley must be taken into account. This valley is blanketed much of the year in thick fog which starts at the Goulburn River and extends all the way through the valley and on to Yea, Mansfield and the snow fields. It is fact that fog together with the topography of this steep-sided granitic valley would create an "amphitheater effect". This will be undoubtedly compounded by the proponents desire to site and space their turbines on topography in direct conflict with manufacturers specification. This will further increase turbulence and therefore create excessive noise and vibration and increase the potential for associated adverse health impacts.

The urgent review and amendment to the Renewable Energy Act is timely and is essential for the regulation of the wind energy industry in Australia.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Adam McCarthy and  
Ms Rebecca Fagan