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STATE OF MINNESOTA
ENERGY FACILITY PERMITTING
PUBLIC INFORMATION & SCOPING MEETING COMMENT FORM

Noble Flat Hill Windpark and 230 kV Transmission Line Project

Name: Donna Baer

Address: 5844 130 St N

City: Glyndon State: Mn ZIP: 56547

Please share your comments and suggestions on the potential issues, impacts, and alternatives that should be considered in the environmental impact statement to be prepared for the proposed Noble Flat Hill Windpark and 230 kV Transmission Line Project. Suggestions regarding alternatives can be directed to: (1) alternative means of producing or conserving the energy proposed to be produced by the Windpark, and (2) alternative routes for the proposed transmission line.

You can turn this form in tonight or mail it to the address provided on the back (use additional sheets as necessary). You may also email comments to David Birkholz, Project Manager at: **david.birkholz@state.mn.us** with **WS-08-1134** in the subject line. **Comments must be received no later than 4:30 PM, Wednesday, February 25, 2009.**

I request a contested case hearing on the Noble Flat Hill Windpark & 230 KV Transmission Line Project.
Docket # IP6687/WS-08-1134
as allowed by Statute MR 7836.0900
Contested case

Signature: Donna Baer Date: 2-24-09

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Monday, Feb 24, 2009

Dear Mr. Birkholz,

My husband and I attended the meeting with you and Mike Beckner from Noble on Wed, Feb 4, 2009. We came to the meeting somewhat undecided as to the idea of a wind farm nearby, since the notice of this meeting was the first we had heard of the project. We thought this was an initial meeting to inform the public of the possibility of a wind project being constructed in our area, along with putting forth the pros and cons. We thought this was very early in the planning stages. When we found out that the project was almost a done deal, we became alarmed, especially when we were told we only had 20 days left for public comment. What on earth was going on, and what was the big hurry?

We immediately began to do research on wind farms in general and Noble Environmental Power in particular, and became even more alarmed at what we found.

Here are some of my concerns:

Noble Environmental Power LLC

First of all, I have a problem with the secretive way in which this project was brought into our community. Why were only SOME of the property owners notified way back in October of 2007? Why were many left in the dark about this project until almost the last minute? So those opposed would not have time to investigate and/or complain? If this is such a good project for the whole area, I would think that the whole area should have been in on it from the very start!!

Why do we want to allow a company with this short of a business history and already this much in debt to do business in Minnesota? Didn't anyone check out their financial status before letting them come into the State? Shaky, to say the least! By their own admission,[1] they are a high risk company and may not even be able to complete the project due to financial instability, and if it does get completed, they cannot guarantee that it will ever be operational, nor can they guarantee any payments to counties or landowners—it is all on contingency!! What are the guarantees to Minnesota and Clay County if this happens? They are already over $900 million in debt, as of December 31, 2007, and have had many problems with other wind facilities, both financial and legal. [2]

Who will pay for the astronomical impact this project will have on the roads? We already have problems with them, especially during the spring thaw, after rain, and during harvest. Normal traffic and the relatively small equipment used by the farmers

[1] Securities and Exchange Commission disclosure statement from Noble Environmental Power LLC—Enclosure #1 and online
[2] See attached articles—Enclosure #2

has such a great impact on them, in some cases reducing them to rutted, slimy hazardous driving conditions. What, pray tell, will the huge equipment needed to bring in and construct these huge towers do to them? Who will pay to fix them? The wind company only states they will do minor repairs and surface gravel. Wind companies have been known in other areas to video tape the roads closely before they come in, trying to prove that the roads were in poor condition before they got there, and then refusing to fix them afterwards. As if any community in their right mind would spend millions of $$ to fix them up BEFORE huge equipment like this is brought in, just so they could redo them again afterwards at taxpayer expense! We taxpayers will be stuck with the bill. We are not in a rich area, by any means. The hardship this would create for the taxpayers in Clay County and in Moland and Spring Prairie townships would be huge.

Who will pay for the demolition, removal and disposal of these turbines if the project runs out of funding and is never completed or functional? How will the land be brought back to it's former condition, if that is even possible, and who will pay for THAT? Who will compensate the landowners who are impacted and who do NOT have a contract with the wind company?

How can the State take away the authority of the local government and mandate what happens in those areas, especially in regard to allowing large industrial facilities in the countryside where the negative impact will be huge? County zoning boards work to keep inappropriate industry out of farmland areas. State officials making these decisions DO NOT LIVE HERE!!! They should not be able to supersede local government!! WE as a county and a community should have the authority to decide what happens in our back yard!!! Those of us who live here and have built our homes here will be impacted, and we should have the law and state agencies trying to protect our way of life, our homes and families!

Wind Contracts

From what I have read from other areas where these companies have come in, they tend to approach depressed areas, and gain the confidence of the local officials and large landowners with promises of big $$ and increased positive economic benefits to the area, without a shred of evidence to back up their claims. There seems to be a decided bias toward the wind company when it comes to the lease contracts. There is a large amount of information that is NOT disclosed to the landowners before they sign unless they have enough knowledge of the industry to ask the right questions. Isn't this fraudulent? The landowners are essentially under a gag order after signing, so that they cannot say anything or complain in any way or risk being sued by the wind company. [3] Many landowners now regret having allowed these turbines on their land. [4] I realize it is the landowner's responsibility to read and understand the contract before

[3] What's in a Wind Contract? Edna McGinnett, Dunkirk, NY Observer—Enclosure #3
[4] "What Have I Done?"—Enclosure #4

they sign, but there seems to be some shady business practices going on here. Noble IS under investigation in the state of New York for unethical business practices! [5]

Environmental

Wildlife: There is ample evidence to show that the wildlife in the areas where these industrial facilities are built usually decreases markedly or disappears altogether. And wouldn't it make sense? Animals have much better hearing and are sensitive to changes in their environment, and they can move out of the area much more easily than the human population. We are directly in a major migratory route for Canada geese as well as other birds, as Noble itself admits in their permit application (See 5.19.1.1). This project will majorly affect that migration, as well as cause huge bird and bat kills, based on experiences in other project areas. [6] I, for one, love to hear the birds singing on our property, and I am not willing to give up my 2-winged friends at my birdfeeders in exchange for 3-winged noise-makers!! I much prefer birdsongs to the throb and whoosh of wind turbines!! PLEASE AT LEAST PROTECT THE WILDLIFE IF THE HUMAN POPULATION ISN'T IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO PROTECT!!!

Watertable: Spring Prairie Township has a very high water table. We can dig down about 30" on our property and the hole gets water in it. WHERE IS ALL THE WATER THAT IS DISPLACED BY 134 OF THOSE HUGE TURBINES GOING TO GO? I haven't seen ANY studies about THAT!!! What guarantee do I have that my property will not be flooded? How do I know my basement and home will not be impacted by the added pressure from the displaced water and the land itself?

What happens to our aquifers? Noble says that the water supply will be unaffected. HOW DO THEY KNOW? Our well is quite shallow, and it is an excellent supply of water. I DO NOT WANT TO LOSE IT!!!

Investment Concerns

Wind energy is not even a financially sound investment. It costs way more than the small benefit it offers. It is inefficient, and if it were not for heavy government subsidies (that is, tax-payer $$), it would hardly be so popular. The wind companies stand to profit hugely, but the average citizen must still get his electrical power, or at least most of it, from reliable sources, of which wind energy is not. We get to pay for these projects at least 3-4 times over—by our federal and state taxes, property tax increases to pay for infrastructure repair, drastic decreases in our property values, affecting resale value of our homes, and, besides that, increases in our electric bills to offset the tremendous costs of putting these wind projects up. Certainly NOT a positive economical impact! (I am certain the wind companies will make sure THEIR owners and CEO's get a fine salary!)

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[5] July 15, 2008 Press release, Albany, NY; Oct 17, 2008, Rutland Herald, NY—Enclosure #5

[6] Wildlife issues, various sources—Enclosure #6

Other Concerns

Is the PUC at all aware of any of these problems? Have you studied these issues before you allowed Noble or any other wind company to come into Minnesota to plan and build this type of facility? PLEASE be sure you protect the citizens of Clay County from the disaster this project will be in the area for which it is proposed.

There are too many questions to ask and so many issues to learn about regarding wind energy itself and Noble Environmental Power, that Minnesota needs to stop all projects and investigate. The issues I have brought up in this letter are just the tip of the iceberg. As public officials, you owe it to the citizens of Minnesota to stop this project and any others that are proposed until a sound, fair and well-thought-out policy is formulated to deal with these projects. I have included a list of web-sites and some other printed information for your study. [7] Please watch the interviews on the YouTube list and hear what people that are currently impacted by these types of projects have to say. Please call a moratorium on wind farms in the state to allow you the time to study well ALL the issues that have occurred in other areas, not just in the US, but around the world. Experts everywhere are calling for extreme caution in planning and building wind farms—for all the reasons stated in this letter and for many others.

If a wind farm HAS to go somewhere, put it where it is a long way from people and their homes! World-wide acceptance of setback distance is at least 1-1.2 miles from residences. I think the US and Minnesota can offer at least THAT much protection for it's citizens!

We do NOT want this wind farm in our community or in any one else's backyard! It is too intrusive, and will have too many detrimental effects on our neighbors and the environment. Our whole way of life will be impacted negatively. Why should big industry be allowed to come in--against the wishes of the majority of those who live here and have invested in homes, many planning to spend the rest of their lives here--and make it impossible for us to enjoy living in the country anymore? Why did we move out of town? To get away from the hustle and bustle and to have a place where we could enjoy the peace and quiet of the country in our own home. I do not feel that Noble Power or any other industrial company has the right to take that away from us!!

Please put a stop to this before it is too late and hundreds of people will be permanently impacted!

Thank you.

Donna Baer

Donna Baer
5844 130 St N
Glyndon, MN 56547

[7] Websites, other documentataion—Enclosure #7