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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

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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.**

According to Statute MR 7836.0900 Contested Case.
I request a contested case hearing on the Noble Flat Hill Windpark and 230KV Transmission Line Project. Docket # IP6687/WS-08-1134

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Signature: L Baer Date: 2-24-09

I have many comments and suggestions:

(1) Noise and siting of wind turbines around residential areas

Turbines should be set a minimum of one mile from residences, as "The French National Academy of Medicine has called for a halt of all large-scale wind developments within 1.5 km of any residence, because the sounds emitted by the blades constitute a permanent risk for people exposed to them." [1] The U.K. Noise Association studied the issue and agrees with one mile. As National Wind Watch and Frits van den Berg, a physicist at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands states, the problems is worse than the wind industry admits. Dr. van den Berg published a paper in the Nov 2004 Journal of Sound and Vibration, "he found that at night, because the surface air is often more still than the air at the height of the blades, the noise from the turbines is 15-18 dB higher than during the day and carries farther. He noted that residents 1.9 km (6200 ft or 1.2 miles) away expressed strong annoyance with noise from the facility." [1] These reports can be found at www.wind-watch.org/news

The reported problems with noise from the turbines are wide-spread, the issues are with turbines 1000 ft and farther from residences, yet the Minnesota Statute is only 500 ft! Noble is being generous and neighborly with 700 ft – still 300 ft closer than many states. Some states are adjusting the setbacks farther away due to noise problems.

(2) The close proximity of turbines to residences

The Minnesota PUC needs to halt all wind turbine farms and study the siting standards and where they came from. There are studies all over the world challenging the setback of less than one mile. This is for health, noise and safety reasons. Just spend 15 minutes on the internet and you will find information citing issues with the turbines being too close to residences--information from people living too close, from doctors, physicists, township supervisors, judges, law enforcement, etc. It is not right for the State of Minnesota to allow the destruction of people's health and well-being because of misplaced wind turbines.

(3) Health Issues

Dr Jay Pettegrew, researcher, neurologist and professor for the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Nine Pierpont, MD, PhD [2], Dr. Amanda Harry, a British physician, the World Health Organization, and the American Journal of Otolaryngology, are only a few of the many people and organizations that are sending out notices of health issues from noise, turbine flicker, falling objects, lightning strikes and power surges, fire, turbines actually falling over and turbines flying apart do to brake failure. There is also the issue of possibly not being able to utilize Air Ambulance services if needed.

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[1] Press release—April 2, 2007—Rowe, Mass—Enclosure #1
[2] Article—March 2, 2005—Nina Pierpont, MD, PhD—Enclosure #2

This mounting information and evidence demands that the State of Minnesota PUC halt all wind farm projects and study the effects and implications more fully.

(4) Size and hazards of turbines

The turbines proposed at the Noble Flat Hill wind project in Clay County are 389 ft tall to the tip of the blade at high rotation, with a setback of only 500ft required and 700 ft suggested from residences. If one of these units tips over, starts on fire with 200 gallons of hydraulic oil in the nacelle, gets hit by lightening, and/or has a brake malfunction in high wind, the parts of the turbine could very easily be inside someone's home. Our rural fire departments may not have the capacity to deal with a major incident caused by any of these types of failures or natural disasters. It is incomprehensible to think how a standard of 500 ft from a residence could be deemed safe.

(5) Noble Environmental issues

In 5.2.3 and 5.2.4 of Noble's permit application are some very disturbing and unsubstantiated statements. I quote—"The proposed project is not expected to create a disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on the minority population," and "...low income populations." What on earth does that mean?? What kind of discriminatory statement is that?? Who are the minority and low-income populations referred to, and are they of less value to our community than those at a higher income level? Or is it that because they are minorities or low-income, that they have MORE importance than those of us who are just of white European descent and working hard to make a living? Why does race or income have to become an issue here? Will the turbines somehow be able to differentiate between minorities and non-minorities (whoever they are)? Between the lower income population and those making more money? Why is the impact on some people of more concern than that of others? Noble, in effect, admits that there WILL be adverse human health issues, just not disproportionately high! What does 'disproportionately high' mean? And by WHOSE standards?

In 5.2.5 of permit application--"Socioeconomic impacts associated with the project will be primarily positive with an influx of wages and expenditures made at the local businesses during the project construction." Again, not true. Spring Prairie and Moland townships don't have any businesses in them to benefit—only farmland and residences. The wages earned by the workers will go home with them to the states where they live. There has not been a significant amount of new jobs created by these projects in other areas. Can we really believe it will be different here?

"Additionally, there will be an increase in the county's tax bases from the construction and operation of the wind turbines." NOT TRUE! My understanding is that the turbines are not taxable—the only increase in taxes will come when the county raises the taxes for

the residents to fix the roads and pay for the lost property taxes when people move out and abandon their homes due to the adverse noise and other issues.

There is no beneficial impact from the project locally—all power leaves the area, all money from construction leaves the area, our state and federal taxes go up to fund these useless 'power providers' that must still be backed 100% by an additional power source because they are not reliable.

(6) Implications to local government and citizens from non-compliance

Noble makes many claims in their application. No where do I see where they back up their claims. They talk about water, telephones, TV, noise, etc. What if Noble doesn't comply and has noise exceeding the 50 dBA limit (which is too high for normal sleep)? Will they be required to remove the turbines? Who will monitor and enforce noise levels? What if they mess up our water supply (they claim they won't)? What measures will be taken--by whom and at whose expense--to fix it? Our cell phone coverage is already weak at best. It has been shown in other areas that wind turbines disrupt phone and TV reception. Is there ANY monitoring system in place for any of these things? What responsibility does Noble have when these things are disrupted or destroyed? No responsibility at all, it appears to me.

The wind farm companies appear to have the ability to put together great publications to sell their product to the governing bodies to get what they want, and leave to protection for the tax-paying citizen when they do not perform or do not comply with their own stated standards. The State of Minnesota needs to take the lead and require bonding to make sure these companies do as they say they will. By looking at all the information available on the internet, the wind farm companies have a habit of not taking responsibility for their actions.

(7) Actions elsewhere

Communities within the State of Wisconsin have taken the bold action of placing a moratorium on further wind farm projects to formulate responsible developmental ordinances. One community, in particular, is the town of Union, Rock County, Wisconsin. They adopted an ordinance in November 2008. This is public record. Please go the their web site:

http://.tn.union.wi.gov/county/app/public?COMMAND=gov.wi.county.view.command.LoadCountyHome+countyName=Union

Look at the ordinance. The State of Minnesota needs to do the same thing--place a moratorium on these developments and study the issues. Since the State has taken all the authority away from local government for the construction of these wind farms, the State

needs to be responsible in working with the local governments on the zoning and placement of these hazardous turbines.

The State of Minnesota is known for it's lakes, recreation, hunting, fishing, wildlife and beautiful untouched natural beauty. We feel our valley is beautiful, as well, and do not want to see it marred with the encroachment of these huge industrial turbines. These wind farms are well known to affect wildlife. The placement of the Noble Flat Hill Wind Park is in a major flight way for geese as they migrate in the spring and fall. We witness and enjoy this every year. If this wind facility is built, this enjoyment will very likely disappear. There are also a large number of bats at the game refuge and park a few miles away. It is well known from other areas that wind turbine blades cause large bat kills. The loss of the bats will increase the mosquito population in the area and increase the risk of West Nile Virus.

These concerns are only the tip of the iceberg as far as issues with wind farms are concerned. Please do us all a favor and deny the application for this wind facility. Thoroughly study the issues. Give the authority to regulate these types of industries back to the local authorities and the people who elect them.

If we had had more than 20 days to read and study Noble's permit application, we would have many, many more examples of problems with this project—problems which Noble has not honestly and thoroughly addressed.

Thank you.

Lanny Baer
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