

To: SEC Committee Members

Subject: Application of Lempster Wind, LLC- SEC Docket No. 2006-01: Additional Public Comment

From: Cynthia Martin, 24 Splake Drive, Lempster NH 03605

Date: June 4, 2007

I am following up with concerns that I expressed in earlier comments to the Site Evaluation Committee - which include verbal remarks made at the public hearing in Lempster last fall, my letter to Chairman Burack of March 23rd, and my email correspondence with all members of the Committee on May 6, 2007.

The citizens of Lempster are generally supportive of efforts to maximize use of wind energy. However, both a growing body of evidence of the negative effects of noise on human and animal populations, and the unfortunate experience of Maine's first commercial wind turbine project, make clear that the benefits of the technology are outweighed by the costs to local welfare, *if such projects are not properly sited*. If sited where currently proposed, the Lempster wind turbine project will substantially diminish the quality of life in Lempster by causing dramatic increases in noise pollution.

I recently interviewed several residents from Mars Hill, Maine, where the state's first commercial wind turbine project is located. These individuals indicated they regularly suffer from the noise produced by the wind turbines. The wind turbine company understated noise problems to both locals and state officials, so that no one anticipated what the noise levels would be like. Based on the contradictory statements made by Lempster Wind, LLC during these proceedings of the noise levels expected, I have concerns of a similar scenario unfolding with this project.

Residents in Mars Hill noted that the noise from the turbines is not heard by standing directly beneath them, but instead the noise is heard from people's homes at a distance, up to 4400 feet away and better, owing to echoing caused by the hilly topography. "The noise is not directional – it is all around you," said Wendy Todd. This fact bears directly on the decision to site the proposed turbines in Lempster, which features the same hilly terrain as Mars Hill.

Ms. Todd noted that the turbine noise is impacted by wind speed and direction, temperature and weather conditions such as fog, drizzle, cloud cover, and barometric pressure. Changes in one or more of these conditions can cause increases in noise levels, with a ten decibel increase doubling the impact of the noise. Unfortunately, because the noise is not mechanically generated by the turbines – rather, its cause is aerodynamic – it is not impeded by insulated windows.

The following comments highlight the noise problem at Mars Hill over the past six months, since the first wind turbine became operational in December 2006. These

comments are of particular concern to you as members of the SEC, since the Mars Hill *noise problems exist at levels well below what you are considering allowing in Lempster*:

- “We have gone for five days straight with constant noise levels *at 43 decibels* or higher and we begin to cry after three or four hours. By day three, you are ready to leave your house.” (Wendy Todd)
- “It (the noise) sounds like an airplane that never lands.” (Shirley Fletcher)
- “It (the noise) sounds like something in the dryer, like sneakers.” (Tammy Cote)
- “I’m concerned about the long term effects of listening to this, (in terms of hearing loss), especially my young children.” (Tammy Cote)
- “Your mouth just drops open when the noise levels hit *50 decibels*.” (Wendy Todd)
- The regional director of the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) came to Wendy Todd’s house to see and hear for himself. His reaction on a day where the reading was between *44-46 decibels*: “This is a real problem. This has got to be stopped.” His comment to another family in the area: “You are not crazy. There is a real issue here.”

Even prior to the legislative hearings earlier this year in Maine, due to the significant number of complaints by Mars Hill residents, the Maine DEP required the wind turbine company to undertake additional sound analysis, to determine if the turbines were operating in compliance. My understanding is that a report on these findings will be forthcoming shortly.

Is it worth approving a project where the potential noise impact could have harmful health effects not only on residents but possibly also to children attending the Lempster/Goshen public school? Who will pick up these health care costs?

Has any member of the SEC or Lempster Selectmen or Lempster residents ever heard wind turbine noise *at 55 decibels*, the limit tentatively agreed upon between Attorney Roth and the Applicant? Based on the above feedback from Mars Hill residents, *45 decibels* at night will likely be a problem as well.

Enclosed is a 20-minute documentary of the Mars Hill experience. The video underscores the detrimental effect of noise on the quality of life of Mars Hill residents. In light of the arguments and residents’ comments presented in this letter, the evidence presented in the video, as well as the evidence on noise submitted in these proceedings, I urge you not to begin N.H.’s commitment to alternative energy with a project with problematic siting and design concerns, similar to what has occurred in Maine. Please reconsider certification of the Lempster project.