

Save Ontario Shorelines Newsletter March 2017



Industrial Wind Turbines and Health: Information and Testimonials

Industrial wind turbines *in populated areas* such as ours are on the rise in North America yet there are few long term studies available regarding their impact on health. There are many people who have given testimony as to the impacts on their lives and well-being. In this newsletter we are including quotes from residents of three industrial wind projects and we encourage you to use the links below to hear more.

[Jericho Rise Wind Farm, Chateaugay, NY](#): On March 20, 2017, one such testimonial was published in the Dunkirk Observer newspaper by Kevin Sigourney, a resident of Chateaugay, in Franklin County New York near EDP Renewable's Jericho Rise Wind Farm. There are four 482 foot turbines between 1800 and 2600 feet from his formerly quiet rural home. He describes a jet-like sound that rips through his property and sound levels that exceed the decibel level standard the town established (50 dBA which is higher than most recommendations worldwide) when the wind speed reaches about 12 mph. He states that the infrasound levels have not been measured or regulated and that his complaints about the audible noise level have gone unanswered. His story has a warning with an interesting twist in that the nuisance turbines near his home are not his first encounter with industrial wind:

I am not a "naysayer." I am living with these behemoths that surround my property. In fact, I have been living with wind turbines from an older wind farm approximately 3-4 miles from me for the past 6 1/2 years. About 7 months out of the year, due to leafless trees, I can see 15 of them from my front porch. They really don't bother me. I can't say I like them, but I can't hear them either.

Kevin Sigourney shares firsthand experience regarding the difference between wind turbines that are 3-4 miles away and those that are 2600 feet away. Such experience indicates that setbacks should be measured in miles, not feet.

Boralex Project in Port Ryerse, Canada: Canadian citizens have been struggling with inadequate turbine setbacks and recently at a meeting with the wind corporation, Boralex, in Port Ryerse, people spoke out about the problems with noise from the four industrial wind turbines in their town. Just four turbines in operation since December 2016 brought out 40 people to a meeting in February 2017 and even one of the landowners hosting turbines, Wally Faulkner, stated that “his neighbors aren’t imagining things”. Below are some of the residents’ quotes from the February 16, 2017, *Simcoe Reformer* article by Monte Sonnenberg,

Port Ryerse resident Shana Greatrex, “It’s very loud and it’s very upsetting. Our whole village has been affected. This is something we warned about a long time ago and no one did anything about it.”

Landowner hosting turbines, Wally Faulkner, “I’m surprised I can hear them as loud as I do, and I wear an earpiece. They’re louder than I expected.”

Gail Lyons stated that she is often awakened in the middle of the night because her bed is shaking and stated, “This is not about business or money. This is about people. Put your money where your mouth is. Perhaps you could turn them off at night so we can sleep and sit on our back decks in peace.”

In response to news that an acoustical study could take “the better part of a year”, resident Scott Pullen stated, “People’s quality of life is being affected now. Why do we have to wait for months? It’s disgusting, and it’s criminal.”

Hoosac Wind Farm, Massachusetts: In February 2017, Larry Lorusso, a Massachusetts resident who lives about a mile from an existing Massachusetts industrial wind farm, traveled to Upstate New York to speak with citizens from Parishville and Hopkinton, two rural towns that are divided over Avangrid’s proposed North Ridge Wind Farm. Originally a supporter of the wind project, Lorusso is now experiencing noise from the turbines that have destroyed the environment and his peaceful home. The following quotes are from the North Country Now article published on February 16, 2017 by Matt Lindsey:

Lorusso said the noises range from ringing in ears, to the sound of a helicopter hovering or a jet engine that never takes off. But, he says the vibrations are the worst part. “The worse is not what you see or hear, it’s what you feel,” he said. “I can feel my head pulsing – I can put my hand on my windows and feel them vibrating.”

Lorusso said he, his wife and neighbors developed several medical issues since the towers were installed near his home about four years ago. He says the issues include heart problems, high blood pressure, and sinus issues.

He says he has sleepless nights at home, but slept well during his stay in St. Lawrence County. "I wake up in a state of anxiety – on the edge of fear," he said. "Yesterday and today were the first days in months that I haven't woken up anxious." And then there is the ringing in the ears. "It's never quiet, even when it's quiet," he said.

Lorusso said the issues have driven some people away from their homes. "People abandoned their homes, they just left."

According to the following article, "research and development done by wind-turbine manufacturers is proprietary and typically has not been shared with the public, but reports of the distressing effects on people living near utility-scale wind turbines in various parts of the world are becoming more common."

<http://www.howsyourhearing.org/AudiologyToday/ATwindTurbines.html>. Older adults and especially those wearing hearing aids may have difficulty living in an area with industrial wind turbines according to reports from the residents in Wyoming County.

The other sound concern is the one we don't hear. It is all too easy to dismiss infrasound, the sound that is felt rather than heard, and the wind companies are happy to do so. Here's a quote from *The New York Times*, October 2015: "infrasound, sound waves of 20 hertz or less, is mostly inaudible to the human ear. Our bodies can pick up these tiny vibrations through our skin and even our eyes. They register that something is not quite right, and have been shown to produce feelings of uneasiness and anxiety. This is the same process that alerts animals of a coming natural disaster." Infrasound is measurable. Infrasound is reported more and more in areas where there are populations now living with industrial wind turbines, and some say they feel it as far as 30 miles away. If you know of friends or neighbors in the area who believe they won't be able to see these turbines (as tall as three times the height of the Statue of Liberty) or that they won't be disturbed by them, encourage them to read and learn what they can before the health of their family is jeopardized.

Not everyone will have negative physical impacts from wind turbines in close proximity to their homes. This means that the stories of people who have no problems with them do not invalidate the experiences of those who are suffering and have to move. It is similar to any environmental hazard. Not everyone who lives near a toxic site will get cancer but that does not diminish the danger.

The quotes above are from the last few months. There are many more who have spoken and written about their experiences with industrial wind turbines going back more than a decade.

Below are a few more links and you can find additional stories on the SOS website and Facebook page.

- This [link](#) is testimony from a resident who lives in Orangeville who gave SOS members a tour of the turbines in his area. He built his dream home in Orangeville, New York, spoke about his need to move away from his home so that he could sleep at night. He talks about his symptoms and his gradual awareness of what was causing them.
- [2011 News report](#) from Ontario Canada:
- [Another Testimonial](#) from Australia.
- Here is a [link](#) to an article on how industrial wind turbines can harm **children**. We will do a separate issue on this topic in upcoming months.