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Flat Rocks Wind Farm Planning Submission

COPY

Ian & Susan Palmer
RMB 473
Kojonup WA 6395

The Shire of Kojonup
93 Albany Highway
Kojonup WA 6395

31 January 2011

Dear CEO and Councillors,

RE: PROPOSED FLAT ROCKS WINDFARM

We would like to take the opportunity to make comments to you on the proposed Flat Rocks Wind Farm.

Our properties are located on the western and northern boundary of the proposed wind farm. We were asked if we would agree to be part of the proposed wind farm as they would like to locate turbines on our farm, but we declined the offer.

At first we were not opposed to a wind farm being located in this area, but further investigation has revealed information regarding the problems other people are having when living in close proximity to a wind farm. We now feel very strongly that this wind farm should not proceed.

The grounds for this are as follows,

- Strong anecdotal evidence of significant health issues.
- The impact on neighbouring land values.
- The loss of visual amenity.
- The impact on land and aerial spraying operations.
- Other forms of renewable energy may offer greater benefits to the local community.
- Liability when problems arise

As several sections of the proposal for the wind farm are incomplete we may wish to make further comments in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Ian & Susan Palmer

Ian & Susan Palmer

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Health Issues

It only took one visit to the Albany wind farm for us to decide not to have any wind turbines on our property. The feeling was hard to describe but strong enough for us to be convinced that we would not choose to live close to a wind turbine. There is strong evidence that people living near wind farms suffer health problems which include headaches, dizziness, nausea, exhaustion, anxiety, irritability, depression, tinnitus and problems with sleep, concentration and learning. Some of these health issues have been reported to occur up to 4.5 Km from the turbines. The information available is enough to make us very uneasy about the prospect of having a wind farm so close to our home.

Impact on neighbouring land values

There are no benefits for the people living near a wind farm. The close proximity of turbines would have significant and negative impact on the land values of neighbouring properties. We would never purchase land next to a wind farm and believe most people would have a similar opinion.

Loss of visual amenity

This proposed wind farm will have towers larger than the ones located in Albany. These turbines could have tip heights up to 146m and will be visible from a great distance. Regardless of which size and number are chosen they will certainly create an eyesore on the rural landscape and a number will be visible from our house.

The affect on land and aerial spraying operations

The wind speed and direction as well as the topography will govern how the turbulence generated by the turbines effects spraying operations. This will only become evident after the turbines have been erected, too late for those living next to the wind farm. Safe management of chemicals and fertilisers is an integral part of a cropping programme, where accurate application is necessary for efficient use and desired outcomes. Any impediment to a farmer's ability to successfully achieve this should be avoided.

The affect on aerial spraying has been studied and the included article from the Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association indicates their findings and should be taken into consideration.

Other forms of renewable energy may offer greater benefit to the local community.

The Federal Government's target of 20% renewable energy by 2020 has given wind an advantage simply because it is able to be up and running in a shorter time frame. The problem with wind power is the need to have base load back up to cover the times when the wind is not blowing or the turbines are not able to be used because the wind speed is too great. Other factors also create periods when the turbines cannot be used. This back up power source to guarantee supply is usually a gas or coal source and will not help achieve the targets that have been set.

We believe a base load biomass power station based on oil mallees would be of greater benefit to the community. We have included a discussion paper prepared by the Oil Mallee Association that highlights issues relevant to this wind farm proposal.

Liability when problems arise

We feel that if this wind farm is built and any of the neighbours have issues other than those stated in the proposal, namely, noise, blade flicker or interference with TV reception legal action will be the only way to have their problems addressed. There are more than 20 farm houses located less than 4.5Km from the turbines in this proposal. Experiences in other locations, such as Waubra in Victoria, indicate that there would be residents who would be adversely affected. The location of these turbines on prime agricultural land, so close to many houses is not the best or most appropriate site for this project. Assuming those who do not respond or raise objections actually approve of the proposal is not a wise course to take. We urge council to strongly reject this development application.

Further Information

The Dean Report: A Noise impact assessment of the Waubra Wind Farm
Pages 110 -113 <http://www.windaction.org/documents/28511>

Wind Turbines, Noise and Health
http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/wp-content/uploads/wtnoise_health_2007_a_harry.pdf

IAAA - Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association
http://www.wind-watch.org/documents/wp-content/uploads/wtnoise_health_2007_a_harry.pdf

Discussion paper prepared by Oil Mallee Association of Australia regarding proposed wind farm (incl)

Proposed Kojonup Broomehill Tambellup Wind Farm – Moonies Hill

The Oil Mallee Association of Australia [OMA] is a strong advocate of integrated tree crop development within the agricultural landscape. The tree crops [principally oil mallee] are seen as a potential new industry stimulus for regional Australia based on the growing, harvesting, transport and processing of short rotation biomass. The development of new industries well aligned with farm systems and agricultural practices is seen as an important requirement in building robust regional communities while strategically delivering beneficial environmental and social outcomes.

The OMA has been supporting development of the Oil Mallee Industry in the central Great Southern region since 1996 and represents the interests of over 110 growers of mallee in that development zone. Many of these are in the Kojonup, Broomehill and Tambellup Shires. These growers are part of a state-wide network of oil mallee growers that total over 1200 landholders who have collectively planted over 15,000 hectares of mallee (ie. over 30 million mallee trees in alley and block formation) to lay the foundations of a prosperous and reinvigorated rural future.

The proposed wind farm to be established at the borders of Kojonup, Broomehill and Tambellup Shires is therefore seen as a potential threat to the potential development of new industry enterprises like renewable bio-energy.

Kojonup, Broomehill & Tambellup have long term aspirations to bring sustainable growth and greater enterprise opportunity to their region and need to make sound judgements on these matters.

In appraising the relevant technologies the OMA wishes to make the following comments in relation to a basic question.....

Is a large wind farm the best of the renewable energy options for an inland farming area in WA?

- Once the wind farm is established it would offer little employment opportunity to the region. In contrast the biomass energy option (using mallee crops, forestry plantation residue or straw) creates a new industry based on the cultivation and supply of feedstock to a power station. This new industry would bring more permanent jobs to the region, provide economic diversification for farmers, their family members and the greater community alike.
- Wind power generation fluctuates with wind speed and for periods of time may be zero. Hence wind power generation capacity must be supported by other energy sources that are able to be switched 'on and off' as the wind dictates. Hence wind power locks in other forms of power generation like gas powered turbines that can be rapidly turned on and off, though this is a very expensive energy source.
- The fundamental problem with energy is that it cannot be stored in any substantial quantities. Therefore as your demand increases, your energy generating source needs the flexibility to be ramped up to meet demand. As our cities grow, energy demand for industry, transport (electric trains) and air-conditioning (commercial and domestic) grows likewise. Unlike many other

renewable options, bioenergy is able to provide continuous (base-load) generation and therefore would be expected to play a significant role in delivering this capacity to meet the demand.

- In recent years we have endured major power shut downs (overload) during our hottest weather which coincides with those hot windless days. This energy management problem is a particular issue in WA and needs to be addressed before it is exacerbated by introducing more wind farms. It is clear that Verve Energy struggles to deliver the necessary peak load power requirements across a variety of energy sources.
- One might ask the question what is driving this great urgency to place wind farms in the middle of prime agricultural landscapes. Clearly the Australian Government with 20% renewable target by 2020 is the initiator but the main drivers are investment consortiums. Superannuation funds, Sydney, Melbourne and overseas investors are not remotely interested in the most appropriate renewable energy concept to best serve the farmers and local communities such as those of Kojonup and Broomehill Tambellup shires. Therefore State and Local governments have to remain alert to the unintended consequences and protect the interests of regional communities who are least experienced in facing environmental and industrial threats.
- Some would say it is a fair analogy to draw a comparison between the Australian Government's Renewable Energy Scheme and the Home Insulation Scheme. Both schemes have merit and are advantageous to Australia. However it was the haste (compounded by the rorts) that destroyed the home insulation scheme. Likewise the pressure or haste that the Australian Government is applying to State and Local governments throughout Australia could likewise bring about poor planning and investment outcomes, as well as creating long term health problems.
- Whilst the states of Australia and overseas countries argue the health risk as to whether the exclusion zone for houses should be 800 metres or 2kms from the wind towers, this is little comfort for existing houses close to the proposed windfarm. No decision should be made until the Federal Parliament Senate Enquiry into wind farms hands down their findings in April 2011. This authoritative investigation will guide local planning integrity to ensure the best outcomes for the local community are met.
- Excerpts from article "The Great Wind Rush" by Graham Lloyd, The Australian, google The Great Wind Rush The Australian (click on Australia) look for 27th November 2010.

On the NSW southern tablelands (around Crookwell) confrontation has developed between farming neighbours over a proposed wind farm. Landholder agreements are secret but can be \$10,000 a year for each wind turbine. Absentee landholders, or those with large properties, are selling permission for turbines that are lucrative and out of their sight but clearly visible from neighbouring properties. Former Maritime Union of Australia national secretary, John Coombs, a property owner – "Any chance I had of having a reasonable approach to this was lost on the basis of these shonks selling them up."

"I am very confident that I would never, ever sign on for one of those wind farms knowing I was going to destroy the lifestyle of the people next door irrespective of whether I knew them or talked to them or had anything to do with them. What it has shown is that this great bush community, where everyone helps their mate, is no different to anywhere else when money is on the table."

-"wind farms produced 80% of their rated output just 8% of the time." ..."conclusion...that wind farms in South East Australia are not likely to supply any significant base load power that can be relied upon, and thus system operators will have to schedule generators as if there were no wind power at all." Google - Wind Farming In South East Australia Andrew Miskelly (click on Aust)

What are the benefits of bioenergy?

- Bioenergy appears to be close to being commercially competitive with wind as a renewable power source (see Energy Tree Crops FFI CRC attached page 8). This includes the purchase price of biomass from farmers, the price being sufficient to make it potentially a new source of income for them.
- In addition to being commercially competitive, biomass crops like mallee can deliver a range of other benefits at no additional cost such as:
 - Mallees have high water use potential and can reduce the amount of water entering groundwater systems and contributing to salinity.
 - They provide shade and shelter and protect against wind erosion.
 - They are deep rooted and can be cultivated in narrow belts in layouts designed to efficiently intercept surplus water and nutrients, hence reducing leaching.
 - They are tolerant of grazing and do not need fencing.
 - They provide farmers diversified incomes and risk management options such as meeting future environmental and /or carbon compliance obligations.
- There are over 400 farms in the Kojonup shire and 240 farms (approx) in the Broomehill Tambellup shire which could all benefit financially from a bioenergy plant in the district. Furthermore there would be many employment opportunities within the district. The Moonies Hill wind farm proposal would offer financial gain to 6 farms (approx) and little employment opportunity compared to a similar bioenergy project. Additionally the farms adjacent to the wind farm properties would almost certainly devalue in land value as has been the case in the eastern states as reported in Herald Sun 30th June 2010 and The Australian 27th November 2010.
- Global estimates of future bioenergy use by the International Energy Agency indicate that by 2050 bioenergy could provide 25 - 33% of total global energy requirements. Biomass already provides 23% of primary energy and over 75% of thermal energy needs in Finland, and 32% of Sweden's final energy use (attached FFI CRC page 4, 2nd para.)
- If the proposed wind farm did proceed it would most likely preclude a bioenergy plant in the region in the future because the South West Integrated System would quickly reach full capacity.

The OMA opposes the development of an extremely large wind farm in the Kojonup and Broome Hill/Tambellup shires and encourages landowners to make their concerns known.

Discussion paper prepared by the Oil Mallee Association of Australia



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Wind power farms are being highly touted as a renewable energy source that is clean, safe, and a responsible way to generate electricity for our nation. However, nothing comes without sacrifice and these projects are no exception. The issue is being complicated, either intentionally or otherwise, by not openly addressing the very real fact that farmers with wind generators may lose the option of aerial application of farm protection products, seed, fertilizers, etc. on their farm ground. Possibly more significant is that their neighbor farmers, who have no wind generator(s) and consequently no income from them, stand to lose that option as well.

Some proponents of wind farms tend to dismiss this possibility out of hand, with the explanation that "those guys can fly around them with no problem," or "just get a helicopter to do it." Others say that ground application can still be effectively performed so the aerial option is insignificant. Unfortunately, it is just not that simple. Sometimes weather problems and/or timeliness of application dictate an application from the air.

The fact is, it is dangerous to fly within the confines of a wind generator farm. Without going into the technical aspects, windmills can cause vertigo sensations, create unstable wind conditions, and extend high enough to seriously affect the way an aircraft can work a field. That is why even a neighboring field without a wind generator may not be a candidate for aerial application: there's no room to make a turn.

Proponents of wind farms point that the \$4-5,000 paid each year to the landowner is a lot of money for a small piece of farm ground. Asian Rust has not been a factor thus far in Illinois, but the potential is huge. Match the \$5,000 against a possible 80% yield loss of soybeans expected to average 60 bushels per acre. At \$12/ bushel, that's \$576. If it's an 80 acre field, that's \$46,080 lost. Cropping decisions will be tough in the future considering you can't change your mind once the wind generator is up and operating.

Will a farmer find an aerial applicator willing to book a field in the vicinity of a wind power generator? The answer is "maybe." It will most definitely be at an increased application cost; possibly double. Helicopters are not the answer because there are only a few working the Midwest and they don't like working in the wind farms either.

The Illinois Agricultural Aviation Association (IAAA) has been disappointed in the lack of candor by some wind generator proponents with regard to farmers' potential loss of an aerial application option. We believe it is critical that a truthful picture be presented so that an informed decision can be reached. In June, 2005, the following Resolution was passed by the IAAA Board of Directors. It was re-endorsed on March 10, 2009.

ILLINOIS AGRICULTURAL AVIATION ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the need for affordable electric power and the efficient distribution of that power to the point of its consumption, and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge the environmental benefits of wind generated electrical power, and

WHEREAS, we understand the financial considerations involved when decisions are made to place wind turbines on otherwise productive farm ground, and

WHEREAS, wind turbine generator farms create uniquely hazardous and unacceptable dangers to pilots flying agricultural aircraft in a ground environment,

WE HEREBY RESOLVE that, in the interest of pilot safety, we will refuse to make an aerial application of any product inside a grouping of wind generators, or to farm land immediately adjacent to a grouping of wind generators, should that proximity be considered hazardous by the pilot of the agricultural aircraft.

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