

MÉMOIRE

SOU MIS AU

BUREAU DES AUDIENCES PUBLIQUES SUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT

CONCERNANT LE PROJET DE PARC ÉOLIEN DE SAINT-VALENTIN

PAR

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My interest in the St-Valentin wind farm project is that I was raised on a farm in Lacolle. I saw the hard work my parents put into making the farm what it is today and watched as they built their home, made of beams and boards sustainably harvested from their small forests over the years. Now that they are finally retired and have a chance to enjoy their years of labour, they are faced with a wind farm project that will affect their quality of life, compromise their rights to build and possibly impact their health. I also have an interest as a citizen of Quebec. When the government pushes for projects without conducting even the most rudimentary of studies to rule out effects on human health, it affects all Quebecers.

The project is not acceptable to the community because of the simple fact that, beyond the environmental impact assessment, insufficient research has been conducted. Any project this close to human habitation, no matter how benign or environmentally-friendly it might appear, should carry mandatory study requirements, with research conducted by an independent, objective third party. That is simple logic for all projects and this one in particular, in light of the reports of health effects in other communities living in proximity to wind farms¹. If the government proceeds with such little regard for the health, well-being and peace of mind of its citizens, that sends a very clear message about where its priorities lie.

Furthermore, I believe we are not fully aware of the impact this project could have on animals. With the region being prime farmland, a significant proportion of livestock (mainly beef cattle and prized dairy cows) may be affected. This is without taking into account all manners of wildlife, include beneficial insects, migratory birds, bats and other. Effects may not be immediately apparent, which is why extensive studies are needed.

Moreover, given their extreme height, these windmills would forever alter the appearance of the countryside, marring views of mountains and fields. That is also the case in my area. Although the wind farm is in Malone, NY, about 15 kilometres away, they are clearly visible and spoil the beauty of the hills for residents living miles around. Then there are the pylons that come with the project, which are a complete eyesore and also carry their own health risks².

The people who live in rural areas cherish the peace and quiet that comes when darkness falls. And, in this area, that means almost total blackness. Already, the installation of cellular towers has disrupted views with their blinking red lights. To have a whole row of these lights would be visually disturbing and forever banish the small pleasures that come with country living. Gone would be the quiet nights on the patio, looking up at the stars and listening to crickets, what with the flashing lights and sound of rotors turning. This might sound laughable, but it is a legitimate concern. People have chosen to settle in these areas for these specific reasons. To fundamentally change their way of life without

¹ Dr. Nina Pierpont (wind tunnel syndrome), Dr. Sarah Laurie (setback distances), Dr. Lynn Hazel (infrasound affecting health).

² Dr. Thomas Rau (EMF)

their consent is an erosion of basic rights. As it stands, every aspect of living would be tainted by the presence of these windmills.

In conclusion, the wind farm would diminish quality of life, in addition to posing known and unknown health risks. Until extensive, independent studies are conducted, it would be a grave mistake to proceed with this project.

Anita Morf

