

Important UPDATE: September 9, 2010
from <http://www.fiwn.org/>

State of Maine finds Fox Island Wind Turbines in violation of noise standard

After months of data collection and analysis, the State of Maine agrees with the neighbors of the turbine farm on Vinalhaven: Fox Island Wind is in violation of state noise standard of 45 dba for nighttime operation.

In a letter dated September 9, 2010 to the State of Maine DEP, the state's consultant on wind turbine noise writes, "... there exists a significant body of consistent meteorological and sound data indicating sound levels greater than applicable limits. Substantial changes are recommended for FIW nighttime operations, limiting (WTG) sound levels at ML-A (state approved site) to 45 dba."

The Fox Island Wind Turbine Farm on the picturesque Maine island of Vinalhaven was commissioned in November 2009. Initially, the entire Vinalhaven community was proud of the wind turbine farm. Contrary to expectations, it instantly became a symbol of what can go wrong when wind turbine farms are placed too close to residences. As soon as the turbines began spinning, neighbors -- promised that "ambient noise" would mask the sound -- began complaining about excessive noise from the three 1.5 megawatt GE turbines.

For their complaints to have merit with the state environmental agency, the neighbors took action; raising funds in order to provide acoustic analyses and working with state regulators to establish a certified protocol for measuring noise violations from wind turbines. The local electric utility denies running out of compliance with state noise standards. The current violations are occurring despite running the turbines at lower "noise reduced operation".

The board of Fox Island Electric Cooperative and the project manager, Harvard Business School professor George Baker, repeatedly claimed to the Vinalhaven community that the wind turbine facility is operating according to state noise standards, denying the significant distress experienced by neighbors. FIW attorneys sought exemptions that would have allowed the turbines to run louder and have contested efforts by neighbors to do acoustical measurement.

Art Lindgren, one of the Fox Island Wind neighbors, said, "This statement by the Department of Environmental Protection is very welcome news. We look forward to working with Fox Island Wind and the Fox Island Electric Cooperative to turn down the turbines so that our peace and quiet is returned and the turbines do not violate state law."