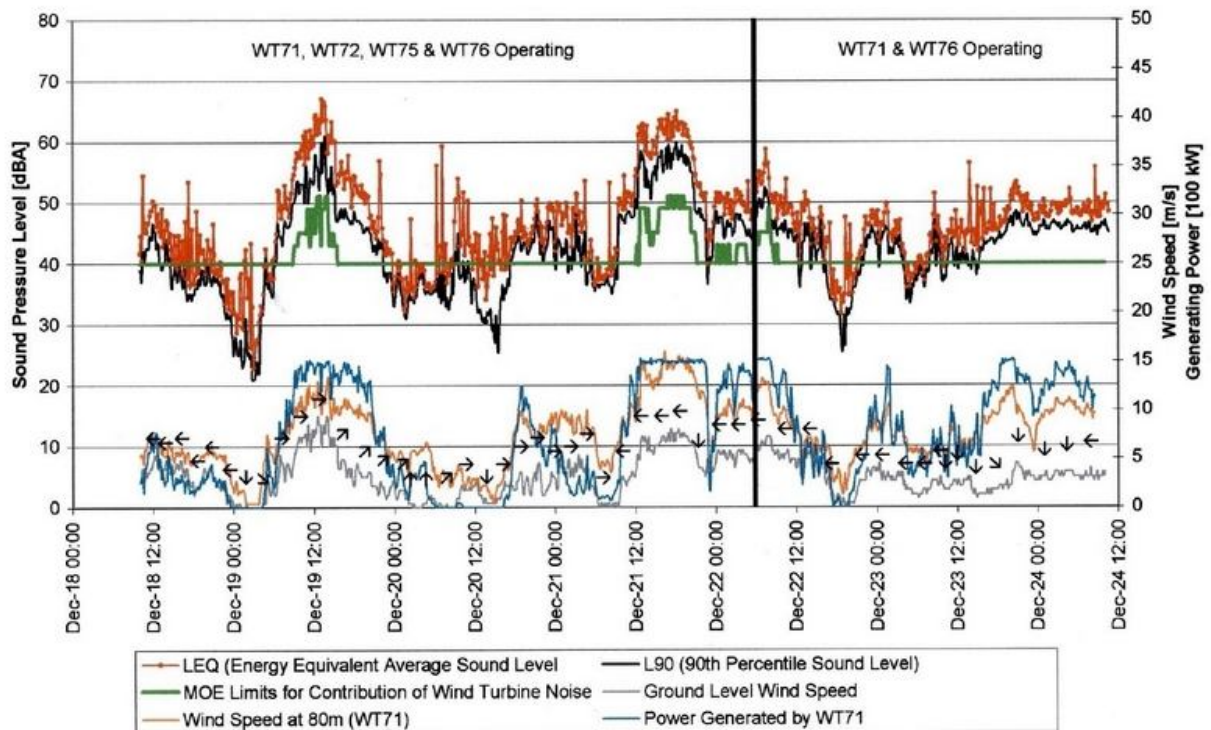


The Barbara Ashbee Noise Measurements

Wind industry opponents and proponents could probably argue endlessly about how loud, disruptive and unhealthy turbines are, but every now and then some undeniable facts are revealed that pretty well settles those arguments. Barbara Ashbee and her husband Dennis Lormand were living in the Shelburne, Ontario area when Canadian Hydro Developers built the Melancthon project all around them. CHD went through all the applicable Ontario procedures and met all of Ontario's regulations for noise, supposedly insuring that the Lormands and their neighbors would not suffer from same.

Ms. Ashbee is quite the accomplished letter writer, and her letters to Ontario's premier, Dalton McGuinty, made the newspapers and she even appeared on TV, as related in my Noise Complaints post. I'm sure most proponents dismissed her complaints as the rantings of someone who "fell" for all the anti-wind hysteria, or who was jealous, or whatever. It became more difficult to dismiss her rantings when CHD bought her out along with at least 5 others and gagged everybody, as related at <http://windconcernsontario.wordpress.com/2009/08/26/wind-victims-gagged-and-silenced-in-ontario/>. Just how loud was the noise at her place, to cause all her complaints and force the eventual buyout? Wind developers don't release any information they don't have to, but I did manage to get a copy of one of the figures from the CHD-commissioned noise study that was carried out at her home, and then I knew why the buyouts occurred.

Figure 2: Sound Levels Measured at the Lormand Residence. Comparison to Wind Speeds and Criteria. Canadian Hydro, Melancthon EcoPower Center.



The most important part of the figure is the upper three lines. The black and red lines are noise levels as measured, plotted against the dBa scale on the left. The green line

represents Ontario's noise limit, which is normally 40dBa with allowances up to 51 dBa if the wind gets above a certain speed. The wind speeds and power output are graphed at the bottom, with the little arrows being the wind direction.

Before CHD could build the project, they had to show that their noise stayed below the green line, and they "showed" this by having a consultant run a computer model. The red line shows the actual results, and for the period measured (the week before Christmas 2008) you can see that the actual noise was above the limit most of the week, getting into the mid-60 dBa levels on two separate occasions. The black line, by the way, is the L90 level, which is commonly used to determine background levels.

I can tell you first hand that a car alarm horn beeping at 57dBa outside your house is loud enough to keep just about anyone awake. The levels at the Lormand residence, especially given the amount of pulsating low frequencies, would be even worse. After a couple of hours of this almost everyone would be calling the cops. But for wind turbines Ontario has eliminated that option, so she and her family and her neighbors had no choice but to suffer. And suffer they did.

There are at least two major points to be made here - two points that cannot be talked away, no matter how hard the proponents try. **First, her complaints were real and totally justified.** Proponents like to demonize complainers as jealous, or anti-wind, or pro-coal, or hysterical, or working on a law suit, or whatever comes to mind – anything but the noise actually is objectionable. Sorry folks, that just won't fly here, and I suspect it wouldn't fly in most cases, if we could only get to the truth of it like we could here. **Second, Ontario's rules don't work.** The rules were followed and we can all see the results. Ontario's Green Energy Act, by the way, does very little to fix this problem.