

Don't believe the 'yes-men'

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Re: Turbines Noisy, But Not Harmful, Dec. 16.

The comment by a wind industry-paid panel that the sound of wind turbines are an "annoyance that may be a frustrating experience for people, [but it is not] an adverse health effect or disease of any kind" is a classic example of the commercial tradition of paying academics from "prestigious" institutions to be yes-men. Until multiple, carefully controlled experimental studies are completed that accommodate individual differences in sensitivities and their synergistic effects with these amplitude fluctuations in sound pressure, the statement that they are "not harmful" is premature.

As the only Canadian scientist on the Overhead Power Lines Panel for the State of New York during the 1980s, I saw the same strategy employed when concerns about 765 kV Ontario-Quebec-New York power lines were masked by the dismissive rhetoric of profit-driven power companies. However, objective and balanced studies by researchers -- not funded or connected to power companies -- showed the complex and sometimes adverse effects of power frequencies.

A similar independent group, accountable to the public and not to the wind industry, should be created in Canada.

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