

*The following letter from Realtor Russell Bounds to the Maryland Public Service Commission outlines in stark terms how industrial wind turbines do, in fact, dramatically lower property values.

Calvin Luther Martin

November 8, 2005

David Shipman, Esq.
Williamsport, PA

Dear Mr. Shipman:

I have been a full time realtor in Garrett County, Maryland for 13 years, with a sales volume over 100 million dollars, and rank as one of the most successful realtors in this area. I specialize in Rural Property Sales - specifically recreational property, woodland tracts, farms and mountain views.

I have recently testified in a Maryland Public Service Commission wind plant hearing as an expert witness regarding property devaluation caused by possible wind plant development.

Over the last two years, I have had more than 25 prospective buyers look at property in areas within 15 miles of proposed wind plant development. These properties are rural, mostly farms, cabins and mountain view homes and rural home sites.

As a realtor, I am obligated to disclose everything I know that may have a positive or negative impact on property. With respect to the possible development of wind power plants in this area, this is what I've disclosed to those prospective buyers: There are two proposed wind plant's to be located along approximately 20 miles of Backbone Mountain, the prominent ridge that is the dominant geographic feature in the area. The proposed turbines are over 400' tall and may be noisy and produce shadow flicker over the land—large-scale light and dark strobing effects-- depending upon the way the sun shines through the turbines' blades. I have seen how wind plants near Meyersdale, Pennsylvania have altered the beauty of the natural views and disrupted the quiet enjoyment of property, resulting in major property devaluations there.

After this disclosure, not one prospective buyer made any offer for these properties, although they did purchase properties elsewhere.

Sincerely,

Russell Bounds
Realtor

... testimony of Russell Bounds, Realtor in the State of Maryland, before the
Maryland Public Service Commission on windplants affecting property values (2005)

TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL BOUNDS

Please state your name and business address.

My name is Russell Bounds, Railey Realty, 2 Vacation Way, McHenry, Maryland 21541.

What is your education?

I received a Bachelor of Science degree in communication from Radford University in 1992.

Other than through college what education have you had?

I worked in consumer finance for Household Bank. While I was there, I took continuing education provided by Household Bank in such topics as underwriting, appraisals, market identification and consumer finance.

What were your duties at Household Bank?

I handled consolidation loans secured by home equity deeds of trust. My role was to estimate the property value to make sure there was substantial equity. I determined whether the owner had sufficient equity in the property to justify requesting a formal appraisal. I also investigated the entire financial history to make sure the customer qualified for the loan.

In the course of your duties did you appraise property?

My job was to make sure, based on the sales of comparable properties that the borrower had sufficient value in the property to support the loan. If I was confident the value in the was there, we sent out an appraiser.

How long were you at Household Bank?

About two years. I started in Chesapeake, Virginia, where I got most of my training. Then I went to Florida where I worked for the remainder of that time.

Do you hold a real estate license?

Yes. I am licensed in Maryland.

Was there course work involved with taking the exam for your real estate license?

Yes. There was 90 hours of education to prepare to take the test for a license in Maryland. The topics included real estate law, appraisals and market evaluation.

When did you take the exam for your real estate license?

That would have been fall of 1993.

Have you continued your license in good standing since 1993?

Yes.

Where did you start your career in real estate?

I started in and stayed in Garrett County, Maryland.

Is that the only place?

The only place.

With what brokers have you been associated?

In late 1993 or early 1994 I started with Four Seasons Real Estate. After about a year I moved to Railey Realty. I have been there since 1995.

Over your career in real estate, have you taken continuing education courses?

Yes. I have taken continuing education courses over the years to stay current with changes in the law, contract documents and changes in the business.

In the time you have been an active agent in Garrett County, how frequently would you come into contact with potential buyers or potential sellers?

I am in contact with several buyers or sellers virtually every day. With the volume I do, it is not uncommon to be on the phone most of the time with either a buyer or a seller.

On average, how many sales do you handle in the course of a year?

Anywhere from high 40 to 60 transactions a year. Approximately one-half the time I assist the seller and one-half the time I assist the buyer. I have a strong seller representation as well as a very strong buyer representation.

In the real estate business, how is business normally measured?

By dollar volume of sales.

Since you have been working in Garrett County do you know the total dollar volume of properties that you have sold?

Approximately \$85,000,000.

On average, what would your sales be per year in recent years?

In 2004 my sales totaled more than \$15,000,000. Over the last several years volume has averaged at about \$12,000,000 per year.

Of those dollars about what percentage would be mountain acreage properties versus properties related to Deep Creek Lake?

I would have to say a quarter to a third of the volume is mountain or acreage. Typically the lake properties are substantially more expensive, so fewer sales result in a greater portion of the total dollar volume.

In the course of representing a buyer or seller are you ever asked what your opinion of the beneficial characteristics of the property might be?

Every single time.

When it comes time for listing a property, how is the price that is put on the property determined?

First we look at comparable sales; what have similar properties sold for recently. Second we factor in unique features, good and bad, to adjust the price up or down. Is there something that makes the property special? A market evaluation is completed in a format similar to what an appraiser follows to justify a value to a lender.

Who does the market evaluation?

I do.

Who comes up with the suggested price or list price of the property?

I do.

What types of property do you sell?

The majority of Garrett County sales are in the vicinity of Deep Creek Lake or are mountain or acreage properties. I am known generally to handle both. I am probably one of the top three agents in Garrett County in large acreage or mountain sales.

When a Garrett County seller comes to you, what type of characteristics does the seller normally tell you about when describing their property and why someone should buy their property?

Garrett County is identified as a mountain landscape. A place of natural beauty. Typically the first things that are identified are the stronger features with respect to the esthetics associated with that property. If it is a lake front property, owners emphasize an unobstructed view of the water. If it is a large acreage parcel, owners emphasize views of the mountains, or of pristine woods or natural fields. Ultimately when dealing with larger acreage property, the primary consideration is the private, quiet nature of that type of property.

When a Garrett County buyer comes to you looking for acreage or mountain property, what features are usually sought by buyers?

Buyers emphasize the same features: pristine and natural views of the mountains, the woods or the fields. Many frequently do not even want to see houses or other buildings. Many buyers are from the Washington, Baltimore or Pittsburgh areas looking for a peaceful, quiet and natural mountain retreat.

What percentage of your sales of acreage or mountain properties is the primary residence of the buyer?

Very few. Most of these properties I deal with are second homes or what people will hope to be improved by a second home some day. Very few are primary residences.

Why do those particular buyers come to Garrett County for a second home?

To find a dream; to acquire a property they have thought about for years and years that typically must include natural beauty. Whether a wooded tract, small farm or recreational tract, buyers seek a private, quiet country setting.

When you assess the chances of selling an acreage or mountain property, what characteristics do you look for in a property?

Something that looks natural. Something that is picturesque, mountainous, quiet and private. Natural, not something that's been developed in any capacity. Railroad tracks, power lines, busy roads, or any type of industrial development detracts from saleability.

When you refer to mountain or acreage properties, what other kind of special characteristics would make the property more valuable?

Is it easily accessible? What is the balance between woods and pasture? Have the woods been timbered? Has the property been mined? Do power lines run through it? Is there a busy road near it? What are the surrounding properties and how do they impact this property? What is the topography? What are the views? Some people prefer fantastic views perched up on top of a mountain. Others look for something that is gently sloped and can see the mountains. What is the possibility of what may or may not be near it in the future? Does it border the State?

What would be the advantage or disadvantage of it bordering the property of the State of Maryland?

If property adjoins the State, you know that it is tucked up against a piece of property that will probably never have any development of any kind. No structures, no timbering, no mining, no human residents.

Have you had the opportunity to visit areas where there are wind turbines in place?

Yes. I have been to sites in nearby Pennsylvania, experienced the visual impact near the turbines and heard the noise impact from various distances. I have not had as much personal experience in nearby West Virginia.

Have you looked at any of the properties that may be considered mountain properties in those areas to determine what, if any, impact the wind turbines have had on their value?

I do not know the markets in West Virginia or Pennsylvania very well. If we were to move those turbines to Garrett County, however, value would be impacted. Any time you take a thing of natural beauty and you insert industrial development there is an adverse impact on what the property offers. It not only devalues but quite frankly, from my experience in Garrett County anyway, it may render the property unsaleable.

How close to the wind turbines were these properties if you recall?

Anywhere from three miles away up to very close by.

What effect, if any, has the wind turbines had on the special characteristics of properties that are nearby the wind turbines?

Within the view shed it ruins the horizon. The closer you get to the turbines the greater the visual impact. Those people who are looking for the natural views of the mountains find they are diminished or no longer exist. The turbines not only have a visual impact but, also impact the quality of life. The ones that I visited were very noisy. They impact a country setting with a rather large industrial wind plant that takes away from anything I would call heritage views, peace and quiet.

Have you heard from people in the vicinity of the wind turbines as to what problems they have as a result of the wind turbines?

Yes.

What is their primary complaint?

The primary complaint is noise. Second is the visual impact of the turbines. Going into the house and closing the door eliminates the view. It does not eliminate the sound. The constant drone cannot be escaped. The quiet of mountain living is gone. Their greatest concern is the substantial loss of value of their property. They do not believe they can sell without substantial loss and cannot afford to sustain the loss and move.

When you say the primary complaint is noise, is this noise that has any substantial impact on their use of the property?

Yes. It takes away the enjoyment of their property. It doesn't allow them to sleep at night. The attraction of a weekend or summer home in the mountains is the quiet. Buyers want some place to get away from the noise and sounds of industry and the city.

What impact does that type of change in the characteristics of the property have on its value?

It destroys it. It takes a property of substantial value and takes away all of the characteristics that are the strengths of that property. The visual impact takes away value.

The noise takes away value. The property owners complain that the wind turbines take away value and there is no way for them to escape.

You have included correspondence as Exhibit 1?

Yes. Exhibit 1 includes a letter to the County Commissioners for Meyersdale, Pennsylvania from Dr. Robert Larivee, a chemistry professor at Frostburg State University. He includes preliminary noise tests and locates his property and others in relation to the wind turbines. Exhibit 1 also includes letters from other property owners near Dr. Larivee's and shown on his diagram. Both the Hutzells and the Ervins own properties within a mile of the turbines.

Are you aware of any circumstances or transactions in nearby Pennsylvania involving properties that have been sold for substantially less than their prior sale price because of the impact of the wind turbines?

Yes.

Where are those properties?

Somerset, Pennsylvania.

Do you know what the circumstances are surrounding those transactions?

Two properties specifically that sold for substantially less than their original purchase price because of the nuisance issues that were created by wind turbines. The parcels adjoin property with wind turbines. The deeds documenting those transactions are attached as Exhibits 2 and 3. Somerset Windpower, LLC purchased the property of David Ray Sass for \$104,447.50 and sold it to Jeffrey A. Ream for \$65,000.00. See Exhibit 2. Keith and Billie Sarver sold their property to Somerset Windpower LLC for \$101,049.00. Shortly thereafter it sold for only \$20,000.00. See Exhibit 3. The tax map included as Exhibit 4 shows the parcels in relation to the parcels with the wind turbines. The Sarver property in Exhibit 3 is parcel 190-03; the Sass property in Exhibit 3 is parcel 190-02, the Will property with the turbines is parcels 190 and 189. Exhibit 5 is the agreement with Will with a drawing that shows the exact location of the wind turbines. Note particularly the agreement page recorded in Deed Vol. 1676, page 349.

Are there other recorded documents which show the impact of wind turbines on nearby property?

Don W. Paul and spouse acquired an acre of unimproved ground in 1997 for \$12,600.00 by deed recorded in Deed Vol. 1371, page 405. See Exhibit 6. A memorandum dated April 2, 2003 recorded in Deed Vol. 1676, page 355 discloses that Somerset Windpower LLC had agreed to a “property value protection plan” because of the close proximity to wind power turbines. Unfortunately the terms of the “property value protection plan” are not disclosed. See Exhibit 7. Both the property owner and the wind power operator recognized that the wind turbines on the adjoining property would devalue the Paul property. The transaction clearly supports our contention that wind power development adversely impacts the value of nearby properties. The Paul property is parcel 188 on the tax map attached as Exhibit 4.

Did the Pauls sell their property?

By deed dated November 21, 2003 and recorded in Deed Vol. 1725, page 25, the Pauls sold the property for \$67,000.00. See Exhibit 7. Since the house was five years old or less and in light of the sales prices of the Sass (\$104,000.00) and Sarver (\$101,000.00) properties to Somerset Windpower LLC, the property appears to have been sold for less than market value of the same home not located in proximity to the wind turbines. The wind turbines clearly had an adverse impact on the value of nearby properties.

You indicated that you went to the vicinity of wind turbines in West Virginia.

Right. I visited the wind turbines in West Virginia but we have not had the opportunity to investigate the records as well.

What effect, if any, does the visual impact of the wind turbines in West Virginia have on the value of the properties that are near them?

I would expect the impact to be the same as in Pennsylvania. Any time you take an industrial structure of that size and checker them across mountaintops that are often valued because of the views and the beauty they offer, that value is damaged. I am not as familiar with the West Virginia market but I am certain wind turbines will have an adverse impact on nearby properties in Garrett County, Maryland.

Have you heard the noise from the wind turbines yourself?

Yes, I have heard it. It was not what I expected. When you are right underneath, it doesn't seem to make much noise, just a swish. Further away from the structure the noise is more noticeable. It seems that it can echo through a hollow or a valley. Sometimes homes that are closer might not have the same noise impact as homes that are further out. I understand the noise changes day to day depending upon which way the wind is blowing and how the blades are positioned. Some days it may be noisier than others and some days it might not be as noisy.

Are you aware of any information that explains that phenomenon?

A study performed in the Netherlands is attached as Exhibit 9. It explains much better than I can why the noise varies and may be louder than predicted.

Are you aware of people near the West Virginia wind turbines who have concerns about the noise?

See Exhibit 10. Don Woods became aware that Jim Balow of the West Virginia Gazette was preparing an article on the impact of the wind turbines recently erected in West Virginia. He sent this message to indicate the impact on humans, but after Mr. Balow's deadline. It is my understanding there are others who have experienced the noise impact. Mr. Woods advised us others have been impacted by noise who will not come forward. They think since the turbines are in place with the blessing of the State of West Virginia that there is nothing they can do.

Considering your training and experience in real estate in Garrett County, Maryland, your personal observations of the operation of wind turbines in nearby Pennsylvania and West Virginia and the information you have obtained from the public record and from persons with properties near the existing wind turbines, do you have an opinion as to what will more likely than not happen with property values in Garrett County, Maryland, if the proposed wind turbines are installed?

Yes.

What is that opinion?

That property values of the natural and scenic properties within one-half mile and probably within a mile of the wind turbines will be negatively impacted. I cannot judge for certain how far the serious negative impact will extend. The visual impact and the noise impact will substantially diminish special attributes of a mountain view, scenic view, natural setting and peace and quiet. Undeveloped properties will be rendered undevelopable. Some parcels may be rendered unsaleable. The visual impact beyond a mile will likely adversely impact value. The sound impact will apparently vary outside one mile but, if the results of the study attached as Exhibit 9 are correct, the value of some properties outside one mile will be adversely impacted by the noise.

This is a letter from a professional property evaluator. He knows the true value of land and homes. He wrote this to a Michigan State Government group that was writing rules for locating wind plants.

MATUREN & ASSOCIATES, INC.
Real Estate Appraisers – Consultants
1125 E. Milham Avenue
Portage, Michigan 49002
269-342-4800

DT: September 9, 2004

TO: Michigan Wind Working Group
c/o John Sarver, Energy Office

RE: Impact of Wind Turbine Generators on Property Values

First of all I wish to thank you for including me in your email distribution list relative to the proceedings of the Wind Working Group. I have an interest in the topic as a Kalamazoo County Commissioner concerned with land use and regulation and as real estate appraiser interested in the issue of external obsolescence (loss or depreciation to property value from outside the property boundary). That economic obsolescence can come from adverse (nuisance) impacts such as visual (loss of viewshed), blade flicker (strobe effect), noise, ice throw from blades in winter, and other environmental impacts from ancillary installations. I am not aware of any plans to put a wind farm in the vicinity of any property that I own, so I have no personal interest one way or the other in this matter, other than wanting the rights all parties to be respected and protected.

I understand that you have as an item of discussion at your September 9, 2004 meeting the issue of property values. I have had some experience with research on this matter. Unfortunately, I have a prior commitment that day and will likely not be able to attend your meeting. Perhaps your committee is already aware of these valuation issues and studies, but I think that they are important to note in the context of promoting wind farms in our state. As the Vice Chair of the International Right of Way Association's Valuation Committee, I had the opportunity to moderate a session at our International Education Conference in Philadelphia this June. I invited the authors of the two most often quoted studies on the issue of wind farms and property values. Fred Beck of the Renewable Energy Policy Project (REPP) and Dr. David Tuerck of the Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk College both presented the findings of their respective studies. Both studies are available on the internet: www.repp.org and www.beaconhill.org.

The REPP study, The Effect of Wind Development on Local Property Values, is a 78 page report which was published in May 2003. They studied 10 areas of the country. The study surveyed assessed values and properties within 5 miles of a wind farm and showed no diminution in value to those properties due to the presence of the wind farms. Critiques have been made regarding the methodology used in that study.

The Beacon Hill Institute issued an initial 53 page report in October 2003 - Blowing in the Wind: Offshore Wind and the Cape Cod Economy and a follow up 34 page report in March 2004 - Free but Costly: An Economic Analysis of a Wind Farm in Nantucket Sound. The studies focus on Nantucket Sound in Massachusetts relative to the Cape Wind Associates proposed 130 wind turbine generator (WTG) offshore wind farm. The 2003 study projected 1) a small decline in tourism resulting in a loss of 1,173 to 2,533 jobs and 2) a decline in property values of 4.6% (10.9% for waterfront property) or \$1.35 billion and a concomitant loss in tax revenue to the area of \$8 million. Criticisms of that report have also been made.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) study on a proposed wind farm in Tennessee consisting of 13 to 16 WTGs reviewed literature on the issue. Appendix F of the study cites several studies on wind farms and their impacts. Among those are:

1. The April 1996 Danish study: Social Assessment of Windpower – Visual Effect and Noise from Windmills – Quantifying and Evaluation. It concluded that 13% of people living near windmills considered them a nuisance. Property values showed a loss in housing prices from \$2,900 (for one WTG) to \$16,000 (for a 12 unit wind farm).
2. The ongoing study in Wisconsin thought to be done in 2003. My conversation with Steve Brick of the Energy Center of Wisconsin indicated that as of this Spring their study was not finished.
3. The TVA study does mention the value of a viewshed as a percentage of the value of improved property at 8% in Fairfax, Virginia and a South Carolina analysis regarding vacant lot premiums of 147% for an ocean view, 115% for a creek or marsh view, and 39% for a golf course view.

The 2002 Strutt & Parker study of the Edinbane Windfarm on the Isle of Skye notes that the proposed 41 turbines would have a major impact on the locality. They estimated that nearby property values would decline by over \$1 million. They also note at 6.18 of their report that “In Germany, Estate Agents report diminution in values of between 20% to 30% for properties in sight of wind farms. We understand that FPD Savills have reported similar levels of depreciation for properties in Norfolk.”

The report of the Township of Lincoln Wind Turbine Moratorium Committee, Kewaunee, Wisconsin (2000 to 2002) notes that the Town of Lincoln building inspector compiled a list of home sales. The list compared the property's selling price as a function of the distance to an existing 22 WTG farm in the area. His

conclusions were 1) Sales within 1 mile of the wind farm prior to the installation were 104% of the assessed values and properties selling after the wind farm introduction in the same area were at 78% of the assessed value.

Anecdotal evidence from real estate agents near Victoria, Australia indicates a 20% to 30% decrease in property values for homes near WTGs.

A court case referenced in the February 14, 2004 edition of the Daily Telegraph (UK) refers to a house near Askam in the Lakes District. The buyers were not informed of the pending installation of 4 WTGs which were 360' tall and 550 yards from their new home. No mention was made in the seller's disclosure form, despite the fact that the seller had protested the proposed wind farm installation to the local government indicating a large loss in value to their property. The court, after listening to chartered surveyors (appraisers) for both sides, concluded that the property had suffered a 20% decline in value.

The above listing is not exhaustive, but a brief mention of studies that discuss the impact on communities and nearby property values by WTGs.

Is the "jury" still out on the impact of WTGs on property value? Yes, though there do appear to be several indications that a loss in value to neighboring properties is real possibility. Can any state agency conclude that wind farms do not have the potential for causing a nuisance and devalue nearby properties and cause a "taking"? No. Whatever report the Wind Working Group comes up with, it should be informational only, include the differing opinions that are out there, not be used to usurp local land use authority in regulating WTGs just like any other land use nor to deny property owners their rights. In our quest for "energy independence" for our society in general, let us not forget the potential for economic loss to individuals as an unintended consequence. We should be prepared to compensate adjacent owners for any property rights (value) taken as a result of the introduction of wind farms.

Sincerely,

David C. Maturen, SR/WA
Certified General Real Estate Appraiser
Kalamazoo County Commissioner



AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE CENTER

University of Wisconsin-River Falls, 410 S. 3rd Street, River Falls, WI 54022-5001
(715) 425-0640 • FAX (715) 425-4479

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION • COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

LINCOLN TOWNSHIP WIND TURBINE SURVEY
This survey summary completed Thursday, May 16, 2001,
by David E. Kabes and Crystal Smith.

based on 233 completed surveys

Comments for the Lincoln Township Wind Turbine Survey
Completed May 15, 2001

5. How close to the wind turbines would you consider buying or building a home?

Question # 5

2 or more miles at best

The WPS hired sound, noise consultant said that 1 ½ to 2 miles distance is required to mitigate the low frequency noise of the generators.

More miles is better.

I would not build by any of them!

No where near, further than 2 miles.

½ - 1 miles or more

Any of the last three choices

All with mental safety is a factor.

Far enough away that I wouldn't see them but I am stuck with them.

As far away as possible.

Ugly, would not buy in this area again.

Own

No where near

I personally think they are an eyesore and would not want them near my home.

No where near them what so ever.

Cars stop on road in front of me to look at the wind turbines, almost hit one vehicle.

No where in sight of them.

30 miles

Where I could no longer see them or the flashing lights.

25+ miles. They can be seen from this distance.

Many

2 or more counties

2 or more miles- this is even too close.

No where near.

Will never build another house.

2 miles is too close yet.

At least 2 miles.

No where near them never ever!! Not for a million dollars.

I would build as close as is legally possible is as I chose to build in their area or to living.
As far as possible!
Would never consider it. Plan on moving if we can sell our house.

Calvin Luther Martin

From: "Calvin Luther Martin" <rushton@westelcom.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 02, 2005 10:15 PM
Subject: ... windfarm co. pays farmer to move because of noise & vibration

... in New Zealand, windfarm company bought out a farmer because he couldn't stand the noise & vibration. Hmm.

Calvin

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/manawatustandard/0,2106,3364982a6003,00.html>

Meridian pays family to move

02 August 2005

By LEE MATTHEWS

Meridian Energy has paid an undisclosed sum of money to shift a family from their farm where Te Apiti's wind turbines are located, because noise and vibration made it too difficult to live in their house.

Company spokesman Alan Seay would not say how much the compensation is, as it is a confidential agreement between Meridian and the Bolton family. He understands they will move off their farm and build elsewhere.

He also said the payout is not a surprise, as it had been anticipated in the initial lease agreements with the land owners. It is not part of any of the 20 conditions imposed by the wind farm's resource consent.

"Te Apiti is built on two farm properties. It was recognised right from the start that this family could have issues with noise . . . their house was a only a few hundred metres from the turbines," Mr Seay said.

"The possibility of having to shift was part of the initial lease agreement. These were houses actually in the wind farm, as opposed to neighbouring (houses)."

Meridian has also made a confidential deal with the other farm owners affected. Mr Seay said he understands this has involved building alterations, such as double-glazing windows to reduce noise.

There are no other claims for any kind of compensation for nuisance from Te Apiti, and Mr Seay said he does not anticipate any in future. "This one was made because it was a foreseen situation."

Feedback from the Ashhurst community about Te Apiti has "all" been positive, apart from "one or two vociferous" opponents whom he understands to be working with people objecting to Meridian's proposed Makara wind farm.

"Nimby (not in my back yard) syndrome . . . it's what we've got to expect from some of these groups . . . it's misleading and distorting."

Last November, Ashhurst resident Colin Mahy complained that sun reflection flickering into his house from the Te Apiti turbines was "driving him mad". Meridian had told him to draw his curtains.

Mr Seay said that he had given that advice. "Sun flash is a very momentary thing, it only occurs in certain circumstances and it doesn't last long."

The Westmorland Gazette Friday 9th January 2004

Windfarm blows house value away

A FURNESS couple have won a legal ruling proving that the value of their home has been "significantly diminished" by the construction of a windfarm nearby, reports Justin Hawkins.

Barry Moon and his partner Gill Haythornthwaite live in the shadow of the wind turbines at the controversial Ireleth windfarm near Askam. When they bought Poaka Beck House in 1997, the couple were unaware the arrival of the windfarm was imminent. Previous owners David and Diane Holding failed to tell the prospective buyers in spite of the fact they had vigorously opposed the initial application for the windfarm in 1995 and objected at the subsequent public inquiry in March 1997.

District Judge Buckley decided that this amounted to "material misrepresentation" and ordered the Holdings to pay compensation of 20 per cent of the market value of the house in 1997, £12,500, plus interest, because of damage to visual amenity, noise pollution and the "irritating flickering" caused by the sun going down behind the moving blades of the turbines 550 metres from the house.

In so doing, he made what is believed to be the first ruling of its kind relating to windfarms. He also made the Holdings pay legal costs and a further £2,500 as compensation for "nuisance and distress".

News of the ruling comes as debate rages about West Coast Energy Ltd's application to build Whinash windfarm on fells between the A6 at Shap summit and Tebay. If it goes ahead, Whinash will be England's biggest windfarm with 27 turbines, each 115 metres tall.

Mr Moon and Miss Haythornthwaite are still fighting a battle with windfarm operators PowerGen Renewables over noise problems at their home, but Mr Moon said they decided to go public with details of their case because Whinash and other developments were now looming on the horizon.

They said their experience, and the judge's ruling, gave the lie to claims of the windfarm industry that turbines did not damage property values.

Miss Haythornthwaite said: "If this can prevent one windfarm being built in an inappropriate place it will be worth it."

Mr Moon said: "The windfarm industry is about one thing only and that is profit. People should know the facts for themselves rather than listen to the industry's claims that there is no impact on property values."

Steve Molloy, of West Coast Energy Ltd., said it was the first case of its kind to his knowledge. "I have no doubt it is going to be quoted by lots of people opposing windfarms once it becomes widely known," he said. But he added that loss of value of a property, although unfortunate, was not a material planning consideration and did not undermine the industry's argument that the benefits of sustainable energy outweighed the objections.

West Coast Energy has complained to the Advertising Standards Authority about claims in No Whinash campaign literature that property prices would be affected.

Mr Molloy said the company had just heard about the judge's ruling and would like to study it in detail, but he admitted it may now have to reconsider its approach to the ASA in light of it.

Kyle Blue from the No Whinash Windfarm group said he knew of two properties near the Whinash site where values were already being affected and said the judge's ruling would help the fight against the windfarm. He also said the industry's claims that tourism would be unaffected were as spurious as its claims about property prices.

9:04am Friday 9th January 2004

By Justin Hawkins

Calvin Luther Martin

From: "Angela Kelly" <amk@clara.co.uk>
To: "Angela Kelly" <amk@clara.co.uk>
Sent: Tuesday, January 17, 2006 8:34 AM
Subject: AK Re: IMPORTANT ' Windfarms affect house prices' WMN January17, 2006

RR

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors: -

<http://www.rics.org/NR/rdonlyres/66225A93-840F-49F2-8820-0EBCCC29E8A4/0/Windfarmsfinalreport.pdf>

"Once a windfarm is completed the negative impact continues but becomes less severe after two years or so after the completion."

Western Morning News

17 January 2006

Windfarms affect house prices

I WOULD like to correct the errors in the Wind Power News, Issue 2 recently distributed by npower to some 4,700 local residents regarding the effects of wind turbines on house prices. Npower claims that the effect on house prices was short-lived and prices recovered after two years, and that windfarm developments appear not to affect property prices in the long run.

This is far from the case. The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' report to which they refer is clear on these points. Their chief economist, in summation of the results, says: "Our survey shows a clear majority who find that a windfarm nearby suppresses house prices."

Indeed, 77 per cent of RICS members who responded to the survey in the South West reported that prices are lower; further, the report continues: "Once a windfarm is completed the negative impact continues but becomes less severe after two years or so after the completion."

I am writing to npower to seek a full retraction of this misleading information, but I would ask your readers not to believe everything they are told by these power companies.

Neil Harvey

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