

## **GUEST COLUMN: Wind siting report not to be trusted**

9 HOURS AGO

In October the Wind Turbine Siting-Health Review and Wind Siting Policy Update report was sent to the Wisconsin legislature by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC). This important report, mandated by state statute to be produced every five years, was drafted by the PSC staff and its Wind Siting Council (WSC). Its purpose is to inform the legislature of changes needed to Wisconsin's statewide wind siting rules (PSC 128) and other related necessary actions.

The report is important to people in Portage and Columbia county, as well as to all rural Wisconsin residents, as it is this report that legislators and government officials will rely on for policy making decisions pertaining to future wind project developments in their communities. At the Glacier

Hills wind project in Columbia County, WE Energies bought out one home due to serious health impacts suffered by the homeowners, and two other homes subjected to severe shadow flicker problems. Many more homes have been fitted with blinds to deal with shadow flicker annoyance. These facts, and many more, were excluded from the report, leaving its readers ill-informed or misled.

Readers need to understand how the report was produced and why its heavily biased position cannot be trusted.

But first, who am I to critique the report? Can readers trust my statements? I was appointed by a WSC minority member to serve as his alternate in the event he was unable to attend any WSC meeting(s). To prepare for that eventuality, I had at my disposal all of the documents distributed to the 14 regular WSC members, including all peer-reviewed literature reviewed by the WSC for the health section of the report and all other documents used for the policy update section. I studied all of these documents in great detail, as well as recording and carefully reviewing the audio of all in-person WSC meetings held at the PSC building in Madison.

I also serve as president of Brown County Citizens for Responsible Wind Energy, a social welfare organization working to educate the public about public health and welfare issues related to the siting of industrial wind turbines and promoting legislation that addresses those issues. This has given me very broad exposure to all matters related to wind siting.

Now, let's see how the WSC report was put together.

The PSC staff, historically very pro-wind, drafted the Report and sent it to WSC members for

feedback. Eight WSC members — the “Majority” — take a pro-wind position, including two wind developers (who profit from wind development), two utility representatives (who operate wind projects), and two members of quasi-environmental groups (receiving funding from wind interests). The six remaining members — the “Minority” — are without financial conflicts of interest and focus on protecting public health. All requests by WSC members to modify the PSC staff’s report draft were either unilaterally accepted or denied by staff, or were put to a simple majority vote of the WSC, with the pro-wind majority winning nearly all of those votes.

The majority also had the votes to control important decisions about what information would be allowed into the report, and voted to exclude all “real world” wind turbine health impact testimony, affidavits and resolutions from Wisconsin residents, towns, counties, and the Wisconsin Towns Association. Additionally, discussions in the health section of the report about specific peer-reviewed literature frequently omitted key information contained in those articles, resulting in a report that the legislature could find misleading, and consequently led to decisions harmful to rural communities where future wind projects are constructed. In an outrageous move strongly objected to by the minority, the majority voted to adopt the health section of the draft report “as is” before it was ever discussed paragraph-by-paragraph at any WSC meeting.

For the policy update section of the report, the majority voted to exclude any discussion of noise limits and setback distances used by other countries, even though much of the empirical research in the report was conducted in Europe where noise and setback limits are more restrictive than in Wisconsin. Consequently, the report presents an apples-to-oranges comparison, rendering its conclusions largely irrelevant for informing Wisconsin wind siting policymaking. Finally, the majority voted to make NO recommendations to the legislature, despite a significant number of important recommendations for legislative changes that the minority deemed necessary and submitted for inclusion in the report.

The resulting WSC report amounts to nothing more than wind industry propaganda. Don’t trust it.

The view of the minority, while largely excluded from the main report, is included as an appendix in the main report and provides a truthful, objective report by WSC members whose only interest is protecting public health. Read it at:

<http://bccrwe.com/images/stories/WSCMinorityResponse2014.pdf>