

REF

RENEWABLE ENERGY FOUNDATION

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The Rt Hon Ed Davey, MP
Secretary of State for Energy & Climate Change
Department of Energy & Climate Change
3 Whitehall Place
London

24 April 2013

Dear Mr Davey:

Institute of Acoustics consultation on the *Good Practice Guidance for Wind Turbine Noise Assessment*

The purpose of this letter is to ask you to intercede in the consultation process on the "Noise Working Group's" *Good Practice Guidance for Wind Turbine Noise Assessment* being carried out by a working party for the Institute of Acoustics (IoA). While it is difficult to understand the status and ownership of the proposed guidance, it is clear that it is being carried out at the behest of your department which is also subsidising its production.

It appears to me that the consultation is manifestly unfair, not least because it is not open to members of the public to take part freely in the discussion sessions or to engage easily with the process.

For example, and crucially, I understand that the Guide is to be launched shortly at an IoA conference in Bristol, and that a programme of talks by the "Noise Working Group" members will cover the rationale behind the guidance and the reasons for discounting certain external expert advice received during the consultation.

The cost of attending the launch is £200, excluding travel and accommodation costs. It is wholly unacceptable to charge for attending the launch of what is after all likely to become public policy and instigated and supported (in part) by a department of government. Interested members of the public and other stakeholders will wish to attend such a meeting, but might well be excluded by the location of the launch and the ticket price.

I am not sure what your department intends to do with the guidance once it is published, but in view of the fact that it will have been impossible for members of the public or outside experts to

question the authors on the guidance without paying for the privilege, the guidance can have no strong claim to legitimacy.

As you will be well aware, wind farm noise issues continue to be extremely contentious, and public trust in the Government and expert bodies charged with dealing with the issue is low. The current guidelines are presumably intended to go some way towards providing a remedy for this problem; but carrying out the consultation behind a pay-wall is unlikely to encourage public confidence in the fairness of the process.

Consequently, I ask that you request that the wind farm guidance document, which after all has received public funding from DECC and is in a sense the responsibility of the Department, is launched at a properly advertised event held at an easily accessible venue in a central location, with admission being free of charge. Furthermore, the event program should include time for the authors of the study to be available for questions from members of the public and other stakeholders.

I am copying this letter to the Secretaries of State at DEFRA and DCLG in view of their departments' close involvement with wind farm noise and planning issues. I would be grateful if you could confirm what action you intend to take on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Constable". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Constable
Director.

CC:

The Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, Secretary of State DEFRA

The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State DCLG