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Press Release

20.05.13

New Wind Farm Noise Guidance is Inadequate and Increases Risk of Harm to Neighbours

Renewable Energy Foundation [1] today condemned the new wind turbine noise guidance produced at the Government's request by the Institute of Acoustics. [2]

The IOA wind turbine noise guide, which is published tomorrow, not only fails to address the major problems of current regulations (the notorious ETSU-R-97) but actually makes things worse.

Major problems include:

1. The new guidelines deviate from the previous guidance by recommending a change of methodology which permits wind farms to make more noise during quiet evening and night hours when high wind shear conditions prevail.
2. The IoA's suggested noise condition permits additional headroom for wind farms to make more noise under specific wind conditions that are common during quiet evening and night hours.
3. The IoA guidance on theoretical turbine noise predictions at neighbouring dwellings permits turbines to be built even closer to dwellings.
4. Contrary to the IoA's own professional Code of Conduct, the primary data relied on in the report is not publically available, so the claims concerning the validity of the recommended guidelines cannot be independently verified.

Dr John Constable, director of REF, said: "Almost unbelievably, the IoA's wind farm noise committee report has actually increased the risk of serious noise problems for neighbours to new wind farms, and the risks were already quite unacceptably high."

Dr Constable continued:

"The report may represent current wind industry practice but it is very poor guidance and fails in its duty of care. The government and the acoustics profession should ignore it, as should responsible wind developers who do not wish to antagonise wind farm neighbours."

For further information contact the REF office exec@ref.org.uk (0207 637 4847)

Notes for Editors

1. The Renewable Energy Foundation is a UK charity publishing data and analysis on the UK energy sector. It is supported by private donations, is not in receipt of government funding, and has no political affiliations.
2. The IoA guidelines can be found at : <http://www.ioa.org.uk/about-us/news-article.asp?id=270> They will published at a ticket only seminar in Bristol tomorrow, the 20th of May.