

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
CONNECTICUT SITING COUNCIL**

**Petition of BNE Energy Inc. for a  
Declaratory Ruling for the Location,  
Construction and Operation of a 3.2 MW  
Wind Renewable Generating Project on  
New Haven Road in Prospect, Connecticut**

**Docket/Petition No. 980**

**Draft**

**Prefiled Testimony of Cheryl Lindgren**

- 1. Please state your name and address for the record.**

My name is Cheryl Lindgren. I reside at 941 North Haven Road, Vinalhaven, Maine.

- 2. What is your occupation?**

I am retired.

- 3. How long have you lived at your current residence?**

My husband and I moved to Vinalhaven 10 years ago.

- 4. Why did you move to Vinalhaven?**

After a long career in New York City, my husband's failing health made an early retirement to a place where we have vacationed for twenty-five years, a sensible decision. In 2000 our house was started and since then we have slowly worked on finishing our home, carving out gardens, and tending our ducks and goats.

- 5. Do you live close to a wind turbine? If so, how close is to your home?**

We are 2,440 feet from the nearest turbine.

- 6. How tall is the wind turbine?**

The turbine is 400 feet from the ground to the tip of the blades.

- 7. Were you told about the wind turbines before they went up? If so, what did you think about them?**

When George Baker, then a Harvard economics professor, and the Island institute of Rockland, Maine began plans for wind power on Vinalhaven island we assumed they were

sharing all information about the project. It all sounded perfect for our community. Despite what they may or may not have said the general belief of most residents was that we were going to get one turbine at two hundred feet and that would mean we would be independent from the mainland. People were ecstatic at the thought we would be “energy independent.” The broader implications were never mentioned.

**8. What happened next?**

Those attending the island regular summer electric coop meeting voted to pass the project. Within weeks trees were being cut and a road etched into the landscape. By the end of summer we learned that three turbines were going to be erected. We figured that Fox Islands Electric Co-op knew what they were doing. In fact they were deferring to whatever George Baker, now CEO of Fox Islands Wind, LLC, was telling them. (And they continue to do so.)

**9. Did you have any concerns during the construction period?**

No. During the construction period whenever someone related to the wind project spoke to us about the project it was always with concerns about our ability to see the turbines. While it would be a change to my view I considered that it was my part in making life easier for all of us on the island. When I, or any of my neighbors asked about the noise, we were all given the same answer verbally, in e-mails and also in writing: it would be no more than a light swoosh, at worst, that ambient sound would cover any sound and at best we would “absolutely not hear them.

**10. Where were you when the turbines started operating? What was it like?**

The day FIW started the turbines in late October, I happened to be outside. The noise was awful. It was loud and it was percussive. Looking back on it now, I know that I was in utter shock and disbelief for months. But it only took a day or two to know we had been lied to and our lives would never be the same. The sound permeated the house, even with windows tightly

closed. Gone were my bedtime regime of opening my window to the cold night air and hearing silence, or a deer in the woods, the brook chattering after an autumn rain.

**11. What did you do about this?**

It was discouraging that no one from the project came out to our neighborhood to ask how things were for us. We had to go to them and ask what was going on. From day one we were dismissed, we have been continually marginalized. The neighbors have never received a letter directed to us. All communication has been through public notices in our electric bills where we are described as “some neighbors who are complaining.” Our efforts and pleas to the board of the Fox Islands Electric Co-op were tolerated and then we were dismissed so they could go into executive session.

By late January it was becoming apparent that we would never have the electric co-op board’s ear. So, a group of affected neighbors made a loose affiliation called Fox Islands Wind Neighbors and pooled funds to hire a lawyer to advise us on our rights. His advice was to work with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. We bought a sound meter and my husband started taking measurements of the sound levels at our house and other residences at night.

In March we were able to host Rick James, a respected sound consultant from Michigan, who helped us with our monitoring protocol. Mr. James trained my husband and from then on my husband started collecting data to be submitted to the DEP. Collecting data entails a vast amount of work including calibrating the instrument, setting up and taking down equipment, working on files to submit them to our sound consultant.

All of these stalwart and focused efforts resulted in the DEP, after looking at our data, using Fox Islands Wind own data to determine that they were running the turbines out of compliance with present Maine regulations of 45dBA at night. Now, you must understand that

the World Health Organization calls for no more than 35dba to provide the basic human right of a night's sleep, although many other professionals would say 30dBA is preferred. 45dBA is hardly something we will be able to live with, however, it seems the very least the wind turbine operator can do is run them within the law.

**12. What do you think about having to measure and monitor the sound levels at your home?**

The cruel truth of these last months is that private citizens are now required to provide, at their own expense, the policing force for the wind operator maintaining compliance. It is a burden whose weight has cost us more than money.

**13. Do you and your husband continue to bring your concerns to neighbors and local governing bodies?**

Yes. On January 25, my husband once again went to our electric co-op board monthly meeting to discuss why they were reporting that the turbines had saved the ratepayer 27% while neglecting to tell them our rate would have been down by 39% if we didn't have the turbines. After he passed around his papers he collapsed. He had no pulse, no respiration. He was given fifteen minutes of CPR until the EMS team arrived and applied the paddles twice to revive him. He was airlifted off the island to Bangor where he was told that the stress of the meeting (and the months of work) was the final nail in his almost-coffin.

Art and I are still dealing with the realities of that night, and of the last fifteen months. Although we always thought we would fight this as long as it takes, it is now time to weigh alternatives for our future, and to be grateful that we have possibilities. Most people in our neighborhood do not have any alternative other than to stay in their homes and wait for their heart attack, or stroke.

**14. In addition to what you describe above, how else has the wind turbines impacted the lives of Vinalhaven residents?**

We have all lost property value. Many are under water with their mortgage payments. Many sleep with fans running, or the AC on, or televisions blaring to try and block the sound. Some have blankets on their windows to block out the flicker. All of us endure daylight hours with the never-ending whump and whoosh that you never get used to. And no one talks about the effects of infra-sound on our lives. The only research that's been done seems to involve torture procedures.

**15. Do you have any final comments about the siting of wind turbines in residential neighborhoods?**

While I relate my personal tale of the last year it doesn't even begin to touch the discussion of the real viability of wind energy, or the economics that run these monoliths, or the politics that fuel bad science. I leave that to others to discuss. I can only relate my personal saga of a dream turned to nightmare. When will I wake up?