

Tami Woods

From: Jenny Jorgensen [ralph_jenny@paradise.net.nz]
Sent: Monday, 15 June 2009 3:52 p.m.
To: Murray McLea
Cc: 'John Easter'
Subject: Proposed Regional Policy Statement for the Wellington Region

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Attention Murray McLea
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MAKARA GUARDIANS INCORPORATED (The Society)
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Submissions on the Proposed Regional Policy Statement.

The Society submitted on the draft.

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The Society has concerns with some of the objectives, policies and methods in the Proposed Regional Policy Statement ('PRPS'). It appears to us that residents of the rural area of the Wellington District will have the potential to be unduly and unnecessarily adversely affected if the Policy is not amended.

The Makara Ohariu Community Board is also submitting on the Policy and the Society supports the Board's submissions.

OBJECTIVES 9 &10***Policy 6 and 38:***

Policy 6 defines renewable energy as energy produced from various sources including solar. We support this view. However, when the Policy becomes more specific, such as in paragraph 38(b), renewable energy that is to be considered is limited to only wind and marine. The term 'nationally significant' is used to describe the level of these renewable energy resources and there is also a reference to the need to place these sorts of generation facilities near to where these resources exist.

We question why solar has been ignored when the Wellington Region also has a very healthy solar resource. (Generally New Zealand has almost double the solar resource of most of Europe). An emphasis on solar (and we can see no good reason why this renewable resource should be ignored) will have the added benefit of highlighting the sunny aspect of the Wellington Region. Acknowledgement of the Wellington Region as sunny will encourage more residents to seek out Wellington as a place to live and attract more travellers to seek out Wellington as a place to visit. Over the years Wellington has generally received more sunshine hours than the other main centres: Christchurch, Dunedin and Auckland. However, Christchurch has now overtaken Wellington in terms of population and Wellington is falling behind. Wellington City is now only the third largest city in the country. Highlighting Wellington's solar resource could help to reverse this trend.

There is no good reason why wind turbines must be placed near to people just because the wind power

developers say that the wind happens to be “good” in an area that is populated. Meridian Energy said that Terawhiti Station/ Makara Farm was “the best wind power site in the world”, but when they investigated the site properly they found that turbines could not be built on most of the land because of excessive wind turbulence. Just because an area is windy does not necessarily make it an ideal wind farm site.

So we do not believe that there should be an emphasis on needing to place wind generation near where these resources exist if this means placing wind turbines near homes. There are plenty of suitable places for wind power in the Wellington Region that will not adversely affect residents. Where residents can see that they are being considered as important rather than ignoring the protection of their amenity values in favour of wind power supremacy, then more people will want to live in Wellington. Christchurch and Auckland will benefit from a Wellington Regional Policy that encourages wind power over amenity values.

We submit that what is being forgotten in the “rush for wind power” is that what is also of fundamental national significance, is a well and well functioning society.

The term ‘national significance’ in the proposed policy is inappropriate. The term should not be used in this context as it is a term particularly associated with resource consent ‘weighting’ considerations and should not be confused as a consideration of the same kind here. We suggest the words “the nationally significant...” be deleted and (b) begin with the words “wind, marine and solar renewable energy resources ...”.

OBJECTIVE 9 (c) The word ‘maximise’ should be changed to ‘make best use of’. Maximise indicates a use of all a resource at any cost, regardless of any community or effects-based drawbacks, and as residents of Makara we can assure the Council that the cost to our community of Meridian’s West Wind project has already been too great. The wind power developer has been allowed to pollute far beyond its boundary into private property, with no compensation to the property owner. This has been allowed so that Meridian can make profit. The effect of this is that the adjacent private property owner subsidises Meridian by providing the buffer zone that Meridian should have been required to provide as a condition of consent. The adjoining neighbor suffers the loss in value of his land as a result of reduction in amenity value caused by a wind power developer such as Meridian.

We submit that there must be a policy that requires wind farm developers to contain all significant adverse effects within their own boundary or within the boundary of the project to avoid this unjust enrichment by developers such as Meridian, enrichment at the expense of its neighbours.

At present wind farms are not utilities and so there is no compensation under the Public Works Act.

If the Regional Council is going to push and support wind farm development over local residents’ amenity values then this injustice must first be addressed. To simply assert (without any evidence) that wind power is, “in the national interest” is not good enough. This needs to be investigated.

OBJECTIVE 9 The Society submits addition of wording:

9(f) ‘do not adversely affect local communities’.

OBJECTIVE 21

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Policy 55(b):

The word 'settlements' excludes consideration of any individual residential location within the rural area and the Society is concerned that this will be treated as allowing adverse affects for individual residences. For a fair and reasonable outcome this clause should read "settlements and individual dwellings". The noise for some residents at Makara from West Wind" has already been such that sleep deprivation has resulted. The Society believes that it is in the best interests of the Council to be cautious and much more considerate of residents. What the wind power developers will tell the Council (and others) and the truth is often, and we have experienced this first hand, very different.(Sometimes the complete opposite)

Policy 55(c):

While the intent of this clause is stated to be encouragement for the location of residential settlements in the rural area close to existing services, with use of energy efficient design and renewable energy systems, the Society submits that provision is likely to encourage large scale generation plants in the rural area and that this is unjustified and unfair in this context.

We would like the opportunity to speak to this submission should the opportunity arise, and we thank the Council for giving us this opportunity to submit on this very important issue for our region.

Jenny Jorgensen

President

Makara Guardians Incorporated

Tel 04 476 6828