

Letter of Memorandum

Date: 3-June-2025

To: Whitman County Planning Commission

From: Tom Thompson, Pullman, WA

Subject: Public Comment for Whitman County Planning Commission Meeting 4-June-2025

Topic #1 – Whitman County’s one- sided presentation of information

The Planning Division’s “Renewable Energy Information” page contains very biased and pro-wind energy documents. For example, the American Clean Power (ACP) organization is a pro-wind advocacy group. The Chair of the Executive Committee is Laura Beane, **President of Vestas North America**, with the other committee members a who’s who of corporate green energy. ACP lobbying materials should be removed from the County website. There is nothing impartial with this group. If this is who the County looks to for information, then the research is sadly lacking.

Carol Black’s 4/28/25 letter to the County officials covers the many conflicts of interest in the documents posted on the County’s website. There is no need to digress further. Hopefully the Planning Commission members have read this well written document.

In light of the biased information presented on Whitman County’s website, I’m submitting documents and studies, which present the other side of the issue. I’m asking the County Planner to include these documents on the County website under the “Renewable Energy Information” section of the site.

- 1) Dr. Nina Pierpont, author of **Wind Turbine Syndrome** comes under attack through different documents on the County’s website. It’s only fair then that her side of the story is presented to the Planning Commission. I’ve attached a copy of her executive summary of her book, plus a PDF of the entire book, along with a short document entitled **Your Guide to Wind Turbine Syndrome** by Calvin Luther Martin, Ph. D. I have permission to share the PDF version of the book.
- 2) A 2021 peer-reviewed study from the journal, Environmental Disease, entitled **Wind Turbines and adverse health effects: Applying the Bradford Hill’s criteria for causation**. Note that under the conclusion there is the following statement - *...we conclude that there is a high probability that emissions from Industrial Wind Turbines (IWTs), including infrasound and Low Frequency Noise (LFN), result in serious harm to health in susceptible individuals living and/or working in their proximity. These effects can be attributed to IWT-related events such as recurring sleep disturbance, anxiety and stress, and likely others.* Read the entire conclusion, which cautions against the rapid deployment of Industrial Wind Turbines due to health risks. https://journals.lww.com/endi/fulltext/2021/06030/wind_turbines_and_adverse_health_effects_applying.1.aspx
- 3) A 2013 peer-reviewed study from College of Family Physicians of Canada entitled **Adverse Health Effects of Industrial Wind Turbines**. The conclusion of this report is that harm can be avoided if the Industrial Wind Turbines are situated at an appropriate distance from humans. It’s short three-page report, easy to read. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3653647/>

- 4) 2021 peer-reviewed study from the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health entitled **Health Effects Related to Wind Turbine Sound: An Update**. Note important take aways from this study are that *“annoyance was the most important consequence of sound”*, and that *“There is increasing evidence that annoyance is lower when people can participate in the siting process”*, see the abstract for the full explanation: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8430592/pdf/ijerph-18-09133.pdf>
- 5) 2017 Vermont Department of Health report entitled **Wind Turbine Noise & Human Health: A Review of the Scientific Literature**. This report points out that *the use of the term **annoyance** should not be confused with our everyday use of the term to indicate a “minor nuisance” or “something that causes a slight irritation”*. The report further associates wind turbine annoyance with migraines, cardiovascular symptoms including high blood pressure, sleep disturbance, psychological distress and mental health status. See point #6 Annoyance for more information. See the link: https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/PHA_wind_turbine_sound_05_2017.pdf
- 6) 2020 Acoustics Journal Technical Notes entitled **Determination of Acoustic Compliance of Wind Farms**. This paper deals with the complexities of measuring wind farm sound and different measuring methodologies, plus how to incorporate or account for the ambient background noise of the environment. One key mention in section #6 Conclusions, states *“Some wind farms in Australia and New Zealand give raise to noise complaints, to the extent that residents abandon their homes-despite the wind farm being “acoustically compliant” with the relevant permit conditions (based upon the regression line method).”* Think about what it takes to force people to abandon their homes? Probably not psychosomatic or just an imaginary annoyance? Here’s the link to the technical notes: <https://www.mdpi.com/2624-599X/2/2/24>
- 7) **Honolulu Civil Beat**, 2024. The Honolulu City Council voted to change setbacks to 1.25 miles or 10 times the height of the turbine or whatever is greater, from the property lines. This was in response to numerous health issues and complaints brought by the public from nearby Industrial Wind Turbines. <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/12/wind-turbines-down-threatening-renewable-energy-goals>
- 8) **Wind Turbines and Health – A Critical Review of the Scientific Literature** (2014). The primary author is Dr. Robert J. McCunney, MD, MPH, who concludes in this report that wind turbines do not pose a health threat. Yet, as you read through the document, there are specific examples of health impacts as noted on page e116, *“Participants living within 1.4 km of a wind turbines reported worse sleep, were sleepier during the day, and had worse SF-36 Mental Component Scores compared to those living farther than 3.3 km away.”* 1.4 km = .87 miles, 3.3 km = 2 miles. This study was funded by the Canadian and American Wind Energy Associations, so no surprise to see that no ill-health effects were found in the study. The good doctor has professional ties to the wind industry as a consultant and expert witness. <https://puc.sd.gov/commission/dockets/electric/2019/EL19-003/evidentiaryexhibits/crownedridge/a24-8.pdf>

It's interesting to note that many studies, to include some of those on the County website will state in the conclusion that there's no definitive proof of ill-health effects from industrial wind turbines or they state more studies need to be done. Yet, the same studies will point out that people do experience sleep deprivation, migraines, anxiety and other health affects from turbines. Makes you wonder who is funding each study. The fact that the term "*annoyance*" is used consistently in every study along with data showing that people are impacted health wise is fascinating. Something to ponder on when considering setback distances and protecting the citizens of Whitman County.

Consider also that litigation against big tobacco and cigarette companies was generally unsuccessful until the Surgeon General declared tobacco a health hazard in 1964 and was backed up by studies. Previously, the courts ruled in favor of big tobacco for decades. So just going by court precedence is not necessarily wise or prudent, nor is it right.

NOTICE: In all of these studies, the word "*annoyance*" is a constant and consistent reminder of the impact industrial wind turbines have on the population living near them. There must be something to this annoyance factor in study after study and country after country.

Topic #2 – The need for adequate and healthy setbacks

There are three good reasons for adequate setbacks with wind turbines:

- 1) Protect the health and well-being of Whitman County residents from the real and documented health issues associated with industrial wind turbines
- 2) Protect the home and property values of the County's residents*
- 3) Whitman County's zoning codes emphasize protecting the citizen's viewsheds

Save the Palouse asked for setbacks to be one mile from property lines, that should be the very minimum. From the studies I've been reviewing, 1.25 miles to 1.5 miles from the property lines is ideal to insure health and protection for the residents and animals. Most studies show the further people have to live from wind turbines, the happier and less annoyed they are.

Why should we measure from the property lines instead of occupied dwellings? It's simple, it's not fair nor right to allow someone to install industrial machinery on their property which gives them financial gain at the expense of their neighbor's property rights. If you only go by occupied dwellings, then you limit that landowner's future development of their property, that would be called "a taking" per one of our Commissioner's statements on the County website. Property rights go both ways and need to be respected accordingly.

* Science Direct, 2024 entitled **Commercial wind turbines and residential home values: New evidence from the universe of land-based wind projects in the United States**. This study notes that homes w/in 1 mile of a turbine decline in value after the announcement of a wind project. Homes w/in 1-2 miles experience much smaller impacts. Carol Black posted this article originally in a letter to the Planning Commission and it still has not been added to the County's "Renewable Energy Information" section. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0301421523004226>