

The Secret, Silent Wind-Power Peril (Part III: Fighting Back)

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[This post completes a three-part series: Part I: [The General Problem](#) and Part II: [Nina Pierpont and the ‘Wind Turbine Syndrome’](#)]

How did we get to this point?

Energized by the Arab oil embargo of 1973, federal and state grants, energy tax credits, subsidies and mandates [spurred a stampede](#) toward an artificial market for wind-generated electricity. It was initially most lucrative in California, where more than 16,000 turbines sprouted on the heels of the state’s 50% energy credit.

Many have mourned the death of an estimated (who knows how accurately) 1,100 birds every year at [Altamont Pass](#) alone, including 75-110 Golden Eagles annually. They surely celebrated the fact that 14,000 of California’s first 16,000 turbines had failed and stood idle by the early 2000s, abandoned to the industry’s inexorable move eastward.

Keen to minimize power lost in transmission to population centers, the wind industry expanded into the Midwest, siting clusters of forty to fifty 2MW turbines on numerous [36-square-mile parcels](#) of mixed-use farm and residential landscapes.

Leases were secured from ten to twenty farmers for each “windfarm.” Nearly all included “gag clauses” that silenced and penalized potential reports of ill effects. Thus the industry began an ILFN assault on perhaps several hundred innocent and uninformed non-participating farm families and residents in each location.

Few connected the dots of turbine-to-syndrome pathology, until Nina Pierpont (see yesterday’s post) shared her data with the world in late 2009.

President Obama’s federal stimulus package proposed to pump billions of dollars into the wind industry, which set its sights on installing more turbines ever closer to the more densely populated East Coast, where [aggressive statutes and regulations](#) favoring the industry became the norm.

An ironic breakthrough occurred when towns and even individuals along the East Coast – tempted by the wind industry’s offer of a minuscule share in their grotesquely-large profits – welcomed Industrial-scale Wind Turbines (IWTs) into long-established neighborhoods, where increasing numbers of victims were free to speak.

Government mostly ignored disrupted lives

The moment Fox Islands Electric Cooperative took three 1.5MW turbines online in November 2009, turbine neighbor [Sally Wylie](#)’s “island life as we knew it evaporated.” Although her eloquent description of the unexpected

served as a cautionary tale to others who were considering Big Wind proposals for their communities, human health issues barely registered with the mainstream media in the United States. Impacts on birds, bats and other wildlife were more newsworthy, in their view.

The September 2009 issue of the widely-read *Nature Conservancy Magazine* featured a two-page full color photo spread of the Elk River Wind Project's 100 turbines straddling the Kansas Flint Hills. Ten pages invited accolades and admiration for the agency's joint efforts with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to turn Big Wind away from the habitat of the imperiled [lesser prairie chicken](#).

Nonetheless, substantial research on acoustic radiation as experienced by turbine neighbors around the world had led to calls for [minimum 2km setbacks](#) between IWTs and residences, as early as 2006.

In 2009-2010, many communities were able to vote down Big Wind proposals, if angels made the citizenry aware of the plans in time to speak out before a final decision was made. In most cases, [town energy committees](#) had worked with wind industry representatives behind the scenes for years, hoping to slide the project through before word of the controversial plan got around town.

In Wellfleet, MA, very near the northernmost tip of Cape Cod, where few lights burn in the off-season, the town energy committee announced specifics of its plan to install a 400-foot-tall 1.65MW turbine near White Crest Beach, identical to the turbines that later came to adversely impact over 50 families in Falmouth.

Two citizens deeply concerned about the environment – who had thought wind energy was good and green – nevertheless chose to do their homework. With just ten hours of online research in 2010, Preston Ribnick and Lilli Green found enough credible evidence to be concerned for the people living in over 300 homes near the proposed turbine site.

Over the following month, they amassed more information, encouraged community involvement and respectfully educated their Board of Selectmen, who eventually voted 5-0 against the project. Several months later, both Wind Wise Massachusetts (WWMA) and WindWise~Cape Cod (WWCC) were born. WWCC is “an alliance of neighborhood organizations and dedicated individuals who have joined together in response to the planned proliferation of industrial wind turbines on the Cape.”

Both citizen organizations are among literally thousands of all-volunteer local, statewide, regional, national and international associations working as Davids against the Big Wind Goliath. This article is written and sent out with David's slingshot of hope that the world might finally come to its senses and see the utter nonsense, ridiculousness and deliberate falsity of the Big Wind promise, as well as its devastating scourge.

The Cape Cod towns of Sandwich, Dennis, Harwich, Eastham, Orleans, Wellfleet and eventually Brewster turned back the turbines, despite millions of dollars drawn from a Massachusetts-mandated surcharge on consumer utility bills for the benefit of the wind industry. These millions were dedicated to funding local wind lobbyists and engineering studies for unwanted project proposals, and the majority of the funds were in fact spent on the proponents' legal bills.

Who was writing their script? Lawmakers in Boston who then proposed an appointed Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) which would develop controlling regulations and standards, bypassing community input. Once developed, the controlling regulations and standards would become law without even a stop back at the Legislature for final approval. Once enacted, all appeals would be addressed solely by the EFSB, without recourse to superior Court.

State-level policies that mislead the public as to the value and cost of wind, fund and fast-track the permitting process, and force utility companies into wind Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) are obviously tainted by crony capitalism. They bring enormous wealth to a favored few, in exchange for campaign contributions that help ensure the politicians and regulators remain in power. Additionally, policies favoring the industry lead to seats left open at the corporate table for the policy planner upon leaving office.

High stakes, high rewards for those with the capital to get into the game. Consider the investment opportunities advertised online in Massachusetts:

Each turbine installed in Falmouth and Fairhaven cost approximately \$5 million. Nevertheless, “the newly enhanced array of Federal and State [taxpayer] [subsidies and incentives](#) ... provide investors with the ability to recoup their initial investment *within 60 days of start-up*, depreciate 85% of total project costs *in 5 years*, while realizing *decades of profitability*; truly the opportunity to create the legacy of intergenerational wealth, with an increasing annuity that spans the decades.” [emphasis added]

And for the little guy? “Massachusetts offers [great net metering laws](#).” Our local Massachusetts newspaper reports that a neighboring 149-foot-tall 55kW turbine installed in 2010 earned the owner an \$0.88/kWh production incentive the first year and on-going net-metering payback at three to four times the wholesale rates – at state ratepayer expense, of course. No wonder Massachusetts has the third-highest electric rates in the nation.

The Massachusetts DEP/DPH example

A reprehensible contribution to the state’s internationally infamous reputation for supporting the wind industry while [ignoring its health impacts](#) is the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection/ Department of Public Health Study, which Big Wind has used to bludgeon homeowners around the world.

Widely debunked as junk science and “[pure moonshine](#),” its conclusions absolutely contradict available evidence, as well as the heartbreaking reports submitted for consideration by turbine neighbors.

In the five years since that “[utterly and profoundly dishonest](#)” report was released (January 2012), the causality of intolerable sensations and symptoms from infrasound has been established repeatedly and predictably.

Yet despite the [landmark in situ Cooper study](#), [Krogh’s recent summary](#) of relevant findings (April 2015), and extensive research cited above, the Massachusetts.gov website [declares](#) still today (January 2017) “...no credible, peer-reviewed, scientific evidence has been published to date identifying any syndromes or diseases caused by wind energy turbines.”

Industry/government reciprocal favors at the highest levels of power and wealth surprise no one. But the fascinating questions are how [local boards can allow](#) IWTs into neighborhoods – and how communities can vote at 2-to-1 margins to leave them in place.

Are we so lazy that we do no homework to discover the truth of the matter, or so impressed by the IWT’s enormity and supposed political promise that cognitive dissonance precludes objective investigation?

Curt Devlin of Fairhaven brings up a chilling but very real possibility: We’re witnessing an *in vivo* illustration of Milgram’s 1962 robust, globally-repeated findings that “about two thirds of subjects will [administer electroshock torture](#) to innocent victims, even to the point of possible lethality, when told by a perceived authority that it is necessary to do so.”

In a June 10, 2016, post, Devlin suggests that, “[like subjects in Milgram’s experiments](#), the public is being told that ‘saving the world requires that you put up with the costs of Big Wind.’”

The truth is quite the opposite, and [the science is simple](#). (See [here](#) and [here](#) and [here](#).) The [taxpayer billions](#) spent on Big Wind during the Obama years squandered our financial, environmental and human resources on the most idiotic of engineering conceits.

Fundamental problems with wind power

Wind can never be more than a redundant and intermittent energy option. In fact, heavy reliance on wind turbines actually *increases* fossil fuel usage due to inefficiencies introduced into the system.

Unpredictable, skittering, diffuse and often weak winds blow largely off-peak and off-season. Turbines often generate electricity when it is least needed, and none when it is most needed.

No matter how large, expansive and redundant the wind build-out may be – reliable, entwined, at least equal-capacity “backup” generators are required to provide smooth, dispatchable electricity on demand. Those backup generators must therefore be “spinning” at all times and able to “ramp up” repeatedly to pick up the load (replace the electricity) that a wind project has shed when the turbines shut down due to wind velocities that are insufficient or too high. Otherwise homes, hospitals, schools, businesses and factories must be content with having electricity when it is available, instead of when it is needed.

Some coal and gas baseload generating plants have capacity factors of 90% to almost 100% – meaning they reliably generate electricity nearly all the time. By contrast, wind turbines typically hover between 15% and 25% capacity, and can be much lower during peak periods.

For example, [generating data](#) show that New York State wind projects have 14% to 22% average annual capacity factors – which can plummet to 5% or even zero during the worst cold snaps – and most often are indeed nil late in the afternoon on the hottest days of summer (the peak hours in the peak season of demand for electricity). During cold periods, wind turbines actually draw electricity from baseload generators, to keep the rotors spinning so that they don’t freeze up.

Further, the performance and capacity factors of wind turbines deteriorate over time, compounding the need for sufficient operating reserve and available capacity that can be utilized when ever-expanding clusters of intermittent resources are added to the energy delivery system: the grid.

Whenever intermittent wind power comes back online, rapidly responsive conventional generators are cut back (with energy shed in the process), then ramped up when the wind next goes missing (again drawing energy from the system before returning to a contributory level), multiple times every day.

This makes the backup systems extremely inefficient fuel users and increases their emissions, because they can never be ramped up to their most efficient levels and then just left to run smoothly.

In sum, Big Wind is an obscenely costly, mostly useless energy redundancy scheme that has brought unimagined profits to its inner circle, while knowingly ignoring – indeed ridiculing and leading the charge against – its victims’ desperate pleas for relief.

The vicious and greedy, massive-footprint Wind Emperor Has No Clothes!

And yet it appears that obeisance to the wind industry will continue, until the public hears enough to understand why we need to call the game on this callous, immoral experiment.

The medical community can no longer be silent

Many physicians have spoken out individually, but the profession as a whole has been irresponsibly silent. We need to hear the truth from community hospital medical boards, from state departments of health and from the Surgeon General.

Statements from Physicians for Human Rights and Human Rights First are long overdue. Despite the enormity of its victims’ suffering, the Wind Scam is off limits for most of those who have become famous for speaking out for social justice and human rights. Whatever global respect they may have on other issues, those truly attuned to profound injustice and the abuse of human rights will have the courage and decency to break through the veil of political correctitude and issue a clarion call to end this global tragedy.

Righting the ongoing wrong and preventing further abuse should be high on state legislative, congressional and

Trump Administration agendas.

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Essential next steps

To every reference to "environmental impacts of wind energy... such as bird and bat deaths," in order to educate the public in the absence of the news media, we must add the phrase "scientifically proven harmful to human health and wellbeing."

[Injunctions on nighttime turbine operation](#), [absolute moratoriums](#) and [minimum 1.25-mile setbacks](#) from residences have been codified (but only here and there) around the world. (See also [here](#) and [here](#).) The American public will no doubt clamor to follow suit once it has been educated about the wind industry's all cost-no benefit profile.

We must, of course, focus more heavily on research and development to find sound, scientifically proven, long-term solutions which will provide low-emission, low-cost, smooth and dispatchable electricity on demand.

We must end the wind production tax credit, declare a moratorium on any further IWT intrusion within 1.25 miles (2 kilometers) of a pre-existing residence, and de-commission all IWTs within 1.25 miles of a pre-existing residence.

In addition, we need to revise Renewable Portfolio Standards away from willy-nilly support of wind (and other unproven renewable energy) technologies. Finally, we must outlaw those state-mandated utility surcharges that are biased toward specific industries.

Such actions will do everyone a favor. More investment in Big Wind means less funding of potentially valuable alternatives, the need to de-commission and remove more of these massive turbines after their brief operational lifetimes, and more victims whose plight, health and need for restitution are ignored.

Victims of Big Wind just want the noise, flicker, pain and suffering to stop. They just want their lives back. Restitution? You will never be able to return the years they have lost or truly compensate them for the suffering they have endured.

For some it has been decades, their best years – time they might otherwise have enjoyed with their children and grandchildren. For some, these were their formative years. Some will never recover their health.

The last wind towers to be permitted will be the final shameful twist in the trail of mercenary and pointless environmental destruction, including this particularly greed-driven, callous and unspeakably cruel human health tragedy.

Helen Schwiesow Parker, PhD, is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and a Past Clinical Supervisory Faculty member at the University of Virginia Medical School. Her career includes practical experience in the fields of autism, sensory perception, memory and learning, attention deficit and anxiety disorders, including panic disorder and PTSD. This is Part III of a three-part series. [Part I](#) of this series was posted on February 7; [Part II](#) was posted yesterday, February 8.