

Fox Islands Electric Cooperative
May 2010 Member Survey
Comments in Response to Question #13:

Any other comments or any thoughts you would like to share on the Project in general and/or the sound issues?

The project is for the betterment of the island. It helps the majority. Crank them up to full speed!

#8 Is very difficult to answer. We vacillate between A & B. Ultimately, choosing B as we would prefer to not have our Coop. involved in lawsuits and litigation.

spin baby spin!

Still supportive but feel like we may not have been given all the information before the turbines were built regarding the sound issues.

Green Power!

Keep turbines as they are, if people continue having a problem, sell their homes and move!

Fox Islands is doing an outstanding job! Both operating and addressing the sound issues! Keep up the good work

A lower light bill is a blessing! Thanks for keeping us informed.

I am very supportive of FIW but I sympathize with the residents complaining of noise.

Not a happy customer. They need to have a different system. No one in the office has a clue when you ask a question about your bill! My current bill of \$113 is outrageous!

spin baby spin!

This is the direction we need to go! I'd hate to see Penobscot Bay with an oil spill!

I think it is time to stop coddling a small minority of people, the most vocal of whom did not even participate in the noise level test.

The coop has been very aggressive in trying to lessen the problems and your efforts should be continued, as well as be appreciated.

When we were first here, the sound of the diesel generating plant was much louder than the wind turbines! Don't reduce!!!

I am sympathetic with the neighbors who are annoyed by the sound and vibrations. I also am proud of the success of the wind project. I would urge the neighbors to clarify what solution they prefer, short of taking the turbines down. My fear is a law suit that may result in the turbines being run by an outside company.

The project will benefit the island communities and make them more livable for years to come.

The burdens of the project are far outweighed by the benefits.

I think that anyone who complains about noise levels coming from wind turbines has certainly forgotten how noisy the old diesel generation plant was.

I grew up on "the hill" above the old power plant that had the big old diesel engines running 24 hours a day. It didn't seem to cause any complaints that I can remember. I think the wind power is a great thing for Vinalhaven.

Considering the investment made in this project, it would appear any curtailment in the operation would not be very practical?! In reviewing and comparing my bills for the last 4 months, I found a \$20-30 per month decrease.

I think some real, definitive info re the sound "issues" should be shared - are the issues real as not to an extent curtailment should be instituted?

keep up the good work

I hope you don't feel compelled to go beyond state/federal regs on noise.

I do not believe the complaints of a few should dictate how fox island wind project operates.

I am proud to live in a town where such a small community came together and promoted Wind energy! I feel that it's very successful and the pros outweigh the cons. I don't feel the noise is troublesome, to me, it's part of island life like listening to the lobster boats leaving in the morning. I find peace with the "whooshing sound". Myself and my family enjoy all the turbines have to offer as well as our energy bills.

I am glad we did the turbines and want to see the affected people (by the sound) met halfway.

I have serious misgivings about the reliability of the monitoring experiments conducted so far, considering the placement of the microphones, anemometers, etc. I do hope further curtailment as in 8b with minimal effect on rates will be possible. When I bought a home on the island almost 50 years ago, I prized peace and quiet. I never imagined having to choose between the two. If forced to do so, I prefer peace with the community to quiet, precious as that is.

These neighbors who are having so much to say now, have had plenty of chances to say what they wanted. If they don't like the noise, move back to their other homes away from here. I like the idea of cheaper rates and a cleaner environment.

good job

Property values are less on properties as far as one mile away from the wind turbines. I know of one for sale that two potential buyers have rejected at any price because of noise and sight of turning blades.

The energy charge on each bill has a large variation. March was .04378 and April is .08258. Very close to double. We used 17.5% less power and paid slightly more.

At the dedication, I conducted a (personal) decibel level test at the site along with a simple spectral analysis that yielded some interesting results. If you would like my personal data and results, feel free to email me and I will gladly supply you with my findings.

A great deal more research needs to be done on the effect of sound and vibrations on near neighbors. The website for Fox Isl. Wind neighbors shows It's a problem worldwide, sometimes causes headaches and sleep disturbance. I'm not sure the survey of households asked the right questions of the neighbors. Nor am I sure how much research was done ahead of time on the seriousness of this problem. Some neighbors are clearly suffering.

Long before this project started, one was built in Mars Hill, people on the mountain complained about the sound. I've wondered why folk who felt they were going to be too near, hadn't checked Mars Hill personally for ideas. I'm very happy with the reduction in my bill.

We love our wind turbines. Like the old power plant, the sound is reassuring. We have power and from our own natural resource.

All efforts should be made to lower the turbine sound, it's unfair to those living nearby to do otherwise. Somehow, sound and output must be balanced.

I've got a tree stand 400 yards from the wind turbines. The noise from them bother me for about 10 minutes. After that I don't really hear them. One thing I'm sure of is the noise doesn't bother the deer. I've seen more deer there this year than I've ever seen. I've had the stand there for 15 years.

Like anything, you have to take the time to get used to change. It doesn't happen overnight. I'm glad I don't live next to them but if I did, I would do my best to find a way to deal with the change. I do like lower rates.

It is a very bad precedent to curtail operations to satisfy the few at the expense of the majority.

keep up the good work

keep up the good work

In any new project of this size, there are bound to be some bugs to work out, and I believe FIW is doing all that can be done to help reduce the annoyance factor. That said, I do believe the project has more benefits to the larger population and should continue. Thank you and best of luck finding a sane solution.

thank you

I believe the wind project is good and there should be some more built and this time put some on North Haven

I feel we should use our wind turbines to their full potential. After the great expense and effort to get them up and running we need to take full advantage of the electricity then can generate.

spin baby spin!

I think the few that are annoyed should stop dwelling on it and try to shut the noise out.

I would think the traffic would bother them more than any sound of the turbine.

Keep it up!

Since I summer on North Haven, I am luckily unable to hear the turbines. But I am sympathetic regarding those who are upset by the noise.

We appreciate your efforts to produce this clean environmentally wind energy. We think the wind turbines look like modern sculpture. Also we marvel how elusive they seem to be in the varied views.

We pay a very high minimum "off" rate and with Fox Islands getting free taxes, we do not anticipate seasonal users having any savings—only year round residents.

keep up the good work

It is clear by electrical bills the turbines are performing well. As for the sound, I find it not at all offensive.

The wind power project is essential to the economic health of the island.

The blades remind me of "angels wings"! Best, awesome Green Energy for VH! "Proud of this Island!"

Thanks for sending out the survey.

Every person has to deal with sound around their houses. We live near the shore and hear the waves break over the rocks which is a lot louder than the wind turbines. I say spin baby spin!

Love them, hope they build more.

I don't live near the turbines, so I don't really understand the complaints. I have been at the site on several very windy days and the noise of the wind drowned out all other noises. It seems like a small problem compared to what they are facing in the Gulf.

I fully support the wind project.

Keep up your diligent work in solving the sound level problems. Your grants and contacts say a lot about how your results will be seen far and wide in this country.

You should have put an address on this for us and provided an envelope if you wanted a good return. Think you might need a more visible spokesperson on island folks could see and talk to. Your people are all sort of ghostly images hiding behind company titles.

spin baby spin!

This is a good thing for the community. We should not be turning them down limiting the benefits, just for a few people. No matter where you live there is probably something that does not please you.

spin baby spin!

spin baby spin!

No more oil!

Numbering these surveys was a bad idea and will remove some of the anonymity..it may even keep some people from responding. Please resist the financial "noise" expressed by some neighbors and do not consider buying their homes.

FIEC staff and board are doing a great job. A few suggestions: 1. more info about the wind project, it's benefits and real time data online. 2. Hold a series of public meetings to give the community a venue for voicing their opinions about FIW. 3. Update the bill to show cost savings as a result of the turbines.

We think you people have been doing a great job under difficult circumstances.

I love the project and the way its been handled. I think the residents who have been affected by the sound should have top priority even if it means generating less available electricity.

Glad it's happening. Totally supportive. Hope folks who can hear it figure out a way around it.

Bravo for your responsible work throughout the program's progress and for continuing to do the same for all the users of the Fox Islands Electric.

Excellent, you do a great job. Well run from the start. George Baker is a wizard, Keep up the good communications.

Having read your report, it seems the NRO doesn't have enough of a positive effect to warrant the operational slowdown. Clearly the other avenues you are pursuing are important hopeful options and worth following up with.

I live in town and I can't hear the snowflakes falling!

I regret the community seems held hostage to protest that ignores the good. The complicated matrix of island community life is always a challenge but I would hate to see the turbines go down because of sound issues.

need input from summer residents; look forward to a questionnaire in July!

Not having been there, I cannot really say anything. However, I think some people are just plain old "Stinkers". The neighbors should have participated in the NRO survey, Don't just be part of the problem, be part of the solution.

#2 Electric bill down by about the same amount as our mainland home.

#5 Hear them always when they are going, refreshing silence the few times they are not running

#11 Nice idea, but poorly sited, and concept basically flawed.

#12 Not enough information, often wrong information, and usually spun against the neighbors

#8 Start by curtailing operations down to meet regulations!

I want more windmills!

I feel it's a shame that more research had not been done before the fact and less of a damn the torpedoes attitude, but all in all, quite an accomplishment, and though I sympathize with those that take exception to the noise, I feel that in time they may find it rather unnoticeable.

The best thing to happen for the islands in a long time!

We really like and are proud of the wind turbines. We hope that a fair solution can be found for those who are bothered by them.

Keep up with communication. This is a good thing. Re read Del Webster's letter. He has it right.

Hooray for the courage to progress!

I'm anxious to return to the Island to see the finished project. It pains me to read that so few people cooperated with the sound study/survey and yet so much time and effort has gone on to accommodate the complaints.

I am very proud of our wind turbines and I am sorry to see all the negative press we have gotten since the sound issue developed.

Our views on this issue are mixed. We do feel sorry for Cheryl, Ethan, et al. And we do feel the noise issue was misrepresented during the presentations. There was definitely a promise of "no noise", so the "neighbors" are justified in their sense of betrayal. We should have given more thought to this fact that no form of power generation is without environmental consequences. This has dampened our enthusiasm of last year.

I trust the people who say they and their lives are impacted by the Wind Project noise. If a neighbor is in difficulty, here on Vinalhaven we help that neighbor and we should do the same for our neighbors affected by the turbine noise. They are dismissed by many and are treated poorly by others. This is very sad for us to see happening here. There's also an issue with trust. I don't distrust FIEC, but I'm not sure the Fox Island Wind people are trustworthy, have we been hoodwinked.?

My last bill was up. I still think the project is the best thing for our town.

I am thrilled with the way our community has pulled together, lead the way and, by and large, is accepting the project. It makes me proud!

I feel that the impact that this project, and in particular the noise, was misrepresented

It was unfortunate that you had less than ideal participation in recording sound variation by the neighbors in close proximity. I think you have been very responsive to the noise issue. I'm guessing lawyers are keeping the summer residents from getting a full and accurate set of information.

When will the summer residents see a decrease in monthly FIEC bills? I suspect never. A North Haven summer resident since 1923

I love to see them each morning on my way to work or the ferry. I think that they are art in motion.

I think we should have some windmills on ledges around here like Medric Rock, Drunkard Ledge, Dogfish Spindle, SaddleBack, No Man's Land.

We have been very impressed with the coop /fiw's responsiveness to the sound concerns.

It makes me sad when I see some or all of the wind mills not operating.

I feel that the neighbors that are making the most noise have nothing better to do and should move

back to NY. One of the others is just in it for the money. And if you build a house out of hay, you don't deserve to say a thing.

I respect Del Webster's article very much. He seems right on target with his comments and insights. The BP blowout in the Gulf makes some noise disturbance seem a very small issue.

Great job, we love them.

You should not back off the original plan and goals now. It appears that the primary savings will accrue to year round residents.

Due to all the negative PR throughout the state re: our project, I think it would be very helpful to do more positive PR about it. Too many Mainer's think we, as islanders, don't support the Wind Project. It seems the few voices of negativity have given an incorrect perception. Keep trying to find a common ground with those experiencing sound challenges, and post our overwhelming favoritisms and positives on a state level.

Have you considered sound reduction of homes? The homes near Logan airport in Boston and Manchester NH were given sound reducing materials since the airplane noise could not be reduced.

I think you should have put up more of them! You can put one in my back yard any time. It's the future! I'll take some noise over an oil spill.

I feel the Coop has been very open and informative with the customers. The reduction in electrical bills is very much appreciated. I wouldn't have been able to continue living on the island if they had continued to increase. Thank you.

I think it is extraordinary that FIEC has achieved this. I applaud wholeheartedly everyone involved in the project and give it my unqualified support. Our earth needs more people like you!

This is a very difficult situation. We all are forced to make accommodations when living on a small island but we need to be sympathetic when people feel that their life has been changed by our group decisions. I feel that FIW is doing as much as they possibly can to make this situation right. I will be less than sympathetic if those who are affected continue to refuse to participate in understanding the noise reduction issues.

We are proud to have and see the elegant turbines. The oil spill off FL gulf makes us even happier with Fox Islands Wind

The Coop should establish a method for compensating people whose property values have diminished due to proximity to the turbines.

The people of VH were duped and now are stuck. Land values will go down and taxes will go up. Legal action should be taken by the island and summer folks.

I think this will take time for some people to get used to. I think the turbines are beautiful and the benefits far out weigh the disadvantages. Traffic goes by my house constantly but you get used to it. People get used to the turbines in time. Keep up the good work.

I think our windmills are amazing and am very proud that they are operating on VH. It's the right thing to do! The ocean makes more noise than the mills.

I have no way of knowing how reasonable the state regulations are. However, depending on how many neighbors are involved and the level of the nuisance, I think some accommodation should be made to minimize this disturbance, but not at a lasting cost to the community as a whole. Perhaps an offer could be made to pay them for the reduction in their property values, or provide them with free electricity, or, if nothing else, purchase their property.

Proud to be associated with an island that accomplished such a great project.

I think anything that helps us on the cost of living is worth it. I lived in Boston and cars went by all day every day and after a while you get used to the noise.

Put up a couple more.

I think the turbines are a great positive way to generate power for the Island! As far as the noise: There is noise no matter where you live. Boats @ 4 a.m. in the harbor...airplanes near the airport, sirens from the firehouse, waves breaking at the back shore!

It is shocking that half of the most vocal opponents of the project did not participate in the study recently done to document; understand the noise issue. I am not sure their views should receive too much credit.

If sound reduction is not the answer to neighbor's complaints, then run turbines to meet state regulations. Their complaints seem to be based on perceived loss of property values. A very subjective conclusion reached before turbines had been in operation four full months.

I have listened to the turbines in many different wind conditions and weather patterns and have tried to understand the noise dynamics. These are obviously quite complicated. It is not for me to describe the level of annoyance, I only hear them when I choose to. I do wish that the neighbors were better forewarned about the noise, which was well documented in Freedom, Mars Hill, etc. projects.

My wife and I visited the site and sat at the gate to listen. Wind westerly 15-20 mph. Clocked blades at 18.2 rpm. Heard a little whine and whooshing of wind thru blades. Sound was like airport around 2 miles away..taxiing (not taking off or landing), not intrusive beyond normal city noise. Wind was louder than turbines. Met some Seal Cove neighbors who felt the same way; audible, not intrusive, and a small price to pay.

Project extremely well managed so far.

I am tired of hearing about the noise. There ought to be 20 more wind mills on the White Islands with a cable to link them to the one crossing the bay to Glen Cove!

If they are bothering people at night, I think something should be done about it.

No doubt good for 94.9% of residents, but we are on the Mill River Road with an unobstructed view of the turbines. Never would have purchased the property if turbines had been so visible and close.

Completely understand fears of loss of value. Re: real estate close to turbines. However, given all other alternatives to electricity this is the most benign. Other noises, organ music for N. Haven, stone crushing @ Mills quarry, boat traffic, road traffic on N. Haven road both jet traffic and local plane traffic...all more noticeable than wind turbines noise. Noise would fade into background excepts it's not a constant noise.

The turbines are much more of an eyesore than anticipated. Particularly disappointing are the flashing red lights at night, which change the character of the island negatively.

"The reduction in electric rates on the island is a direct result of the power generated by the Wind Project." This is a material mis-statement. Of fact, the primary reason rates are down is we paid off the loan for the cable! You should be ashamed of yourselves!

It's unfortunate for the neighbors directly affected by the sound but that amount of noise is better than an oil slick.

The turbines are quite visible from my property and I think they look pretty good.

We all have sounds or special considerations in our neighborhoods but we can adjust; if we put our minds toward positive outlook. It resolves itself. (xxxxx trucking operations was next door for years. I thought...at least he is working!

I think it's a great community project. I feel the few that are complaining about the sound issues are only doing so to gain personal financial gain!! They need to start living their lives and stop listening for snowflakes to fall from the sky!!

Great job! I'm proud to be a part of it.

I would like FIW to go to the press with our side...why should a handful of complainers be perceived as the "voice" of Vinalhaven?

My wife and I are proud to be a part of FIW and the turbine project even if we are from away. We feel you've done your best and are doing an excellent job in being sensitive to neighbors of the project.

Keep up the good work. The project is exceeding our expectations.

I would be upset by the noise if I lived near the turbines and I sympathize with those who do live nearby. I hope a solution can be found.

The ideal way to produce power! With what is happening off Louisiana, the clean, ideal way is the Wind. Thank you.

What would be preferred: wind power or the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico?

I have listened twice from the head of Seal Cove, directly downwind and heard nothing; and once at the site. When the sound was a low hum, likely not more than the city sounds I heard and to which I adapted while growing up in NYC. But I nonetheless can believe that the sounds could be greater under certain conditions, and support your efforts to analyze the data. Individual sensitivities to sound vary enormously and I feel badly for those who are bothered.

Keep running those turbines to the maximum! Keep saving \$ for all of us.

wind power is better than local coal power.

Unfortunately, I am currently unable to spend a lot of time on island and do wonder why the rate is the same figure unless this is a basic charge. Thank you for keeping us informed and good luck for reducing noise for those in the immediate area.

I thoroughly support the project. Island residents need to buy their electricity at the lowest rates possible.

Information seems to be biased, seems to be more propaganda than a real effort. If more people vote their pocket books than their compassion does that mean you're right?

I have heard the turbines from 3/4 miles away on Mill River on a windy day. It was barely audible but it made me more sympathetic to those who live closer. I hope we can accommodate those close by, though I still feel good about our choice to go with wind power. How about free power for those adversely affected?

Please give us a break on the \$40 a month charge...it is a lot!

I like the idea that we are not polluting the world and also not dependent on foreign oil for this power.

I'm concerned about the neighbors who are impacted from the sound. I was hoping it would lower my electric bills...it hasn't. I overall support wind power as well as alternative energy technology however, I am concerned about its impact on all living beings and creatures as well as on the environment.

We depend on renters to pay our taxes, and with all the press if we can't get renters, we will not be able to afford the taxes.

The people who are complaining are not from here. And if they want noise try living on main street!

I think the wind turbines are really great for our island and appreciate that we were fortunate to have them put here on Vinalhaven!

I would consider changing my answer to #8 if all the neighbors participated in the surveys. If they won't cooperate with the Board, why should the Board cooperate with them?

I personally think the project is a very positive effort to solve our energy needs, both here on the islands and nationally. They look beautiful and I'm proud to be part of it.

What is the point of having them if we don't generate all we can from them. Don't shut them down just to please a few people who don't like the noise. They knew their options before construction. Many people would also like a cell phone tower now.

Regarding questions 6&7, a person's opinion about the noise while visiting nearby has nothing to do with what it is like to live nearby.

Observations were not highly scientific but, aware that 14 rpm was a "magic" number, I did note that the "whump" and the "roar" were significantly less, practically inaudible..but my hearing is suspect in when the RPMs were at or below 14.

We are proud of your work!

A wonderful project for the islands' future.

They are there to produce power, so let them do their job and then some!

Your newsletters are both literate and informative. Furthermore, you have kept the community informed about the sound issue in intelligent and thoughtful ways. I applaud your efforts! Have you had any bird/turbine collisions?

I'm sorry that the wind power seems to affect some people, but they need to be happy it's not the diesel generators it used to be. Mostly the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. They are lucky that there are six boats a day now. They can LEAVE!

Sound monitoring and research must continue. State DEP 45 db limits must be met, or less noise. All GE and other technology to reduce sound must be explored and installed.

When can we cut the cable?

The sound, as I've observed, is minimal. I think we need to look at the big picture. Curtailing generation would be a shame.

Wait and see, people can get used to anything.

crank em up!

The complaints from neighbors to the north seem to be about sub-sonic vibrations, air pressure waves, something other than sound. So, if a slight curtailment of rpm reduces that effect, whatever it is, I might be in favor of that. I suspect the topography and the extra distance to Seal Cove and A.W. Smith Road causes waves of pressure or whatever it is to smack into the hillside not pass overhead, and bounce across the cove to steep hillsides south and bounce back again at homes to the north. That could be tough.

The people that complain were not here or fail to remember the noise of the old power plant

I think FIEC and FIW have been terrific in being, at least publicly, respectful of the complainants, I am sorry you have had to deal with unreasonable press in return.

How did this project pass environmental review so quickly?

Thank you for all your work. Small scale wind power systems are what we should all be moving toward. They are low impact, sustainable, and the resource is free. What little noise is generated is a small price to pay. I would like to work on soundproofing in a way that doesn't curtail generation of electricity.