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June 18, 2013

Susan M. Hudson, Clerk
Vermont Public Service Board
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2701

Re: Docket No. 7156 – Sheffield Wind – PSD Noise Monitoring

Dear Mrs. Hudson,

Enclosed for the Public Service Board's ("Board") review as an informational filing in the above-referenced Docket, please find four (4) copies of the Supplemental Noise Measurements Memorandum ("Noise Report") prepared by Rich Letty and Martin Brien of KM Chng Environmental Inc. The Public Service Department ("Department") retained KM Chng Environmental's services in response to repeated complaints from residents of excessive noise emitted from the nearby Sheffield wind facility starting in Summer, 2012. The Department investigated the complaints and determined that third-party noise monitoring was warranted to determine whether the facility was operating within the noise limit outlined in Condition 8 of Vermont Wind's Certificate of Public Good ("CPG").¹ Noise monitoring took place during a 72 hour period from December 19 through 21, 2012.

The Noise Report reveals that noise levels from the operation of the Sheffield facilities fell below 45dBA (Leq) outside the nearest residence during the monitoring period. These measurements further indicate that noise levels inside the residence were likely below the 30dBA limit outlined in Condition 8 of the CPG. However, due to limitations in the monitoring procedure, KM Chng did not conduct monitoring inside the residence, nor was it able to obtain adequate background noise readings at the Sheffield facility. The Department is therefore unable to make a concrete determination as to whether the turbines were operated within limits of Condition 8, although the Report strongly suggests that the facility was operating within the CPG limits.

While the Department does not ascribe any conclusions to the findings contained in the Noise Report, it did find significant value in having the monitoring conducted. The Noise Report illustrates the complex challenges that the Department faces in attempting to investigate individual noise complaints and in enforcing noise limit conditions placed on currently operating commercial wind facilities. The problems identified in the Noise Report also serves a useful reference point for developing effective and enforceable noise monitoring CPG conditions for future commercial wind facilities.

¹ See Docket 7508, letter of John Beling, Esq., on behalf of the Department, to Susan Hudson, Clerk of the Board, dated July 17, 2012.



The Department remains committed to developing monitoring and enforcement procedures to protect Vermont residents from unreasonable noise related to commercial wind facility operations. At the same time, it seeks to balance that concern with granting developers the ability to permit, construct, and operate facilities in a predictable and fair manner in Vermont which advances our renewable energy goals. The Department will continue to study the evolving body of science surrounding noise emitted from wind turbines in conjunction with the lessons learned from the three major wind generation proceeding and the Noise Report. We hope that the Board may also gain a better understanding of the complexities of enforcing noise conditions from this report, and that the Board may find this experience useful when looking toward crafting conditions in any future wind facility siting proceedings.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Christopher Recchia
Commissioner

cc: Docket 7156 Service List
Stephen & Luann Therrien