

Transcript Prepared By the Clerk of the Legislature
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Rough Draft

Natural Resources Committee
September 22, 2017

VICKIE MAY: Thank you. Good afternoon, Senators. I'm going to try. I have nothing prepared. I'm just going to speak to you from my heart. I know we're not allowed to ask questions, but I'd like to ask how many of you live by an industrial wind complex? [LR125]

SENATOR HUGHES: Ma'am, could you spell your name for the record? [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: Vickie May, V-i-c-k-i-e M-a-y. [LR125]

SENATOR HUGHES: Thank you. [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: (Exhibit 20) I live in northern Holt County, home to the currently BHE's largest operating wind turbine complex. I don't know where to start. It has ruined our life. Our property rights have been stripped. There are nights we're up fully dressed at 3:00 in the morning because the sound from those turbines penetrate our home and we are a mile and one-third from the closest turbine. When the project originally came in, we were told...my husband is on planning and zoning in our county. The project developer looked him in the eye and said, Keith, you have nothing to worry about. There will be no turbines within four to five miles of you. From our south corner we look at 72 wind turbines. They tell you that they don't make any more sound than your dishwasher. I tell you people if you had a dishwasher that was that noisy you would immediately replace it. Besides that, the dishwasher isn't mounted 425 foot up in the air and there aren't 72 of them outside your home. It is like a jet plane revving up to take off but the plane never leaves. That sound is constantly with you. When the wind gets to a current...a certain speed, then you get a thumping like you're drying boots in a dryer when that blade deflects past that base. And it's always when we're on the downwind side when we have a southeast, east-southeast, south wind, southwest wind, which as you know in the state in Nebraska that is the prevailing wind nine months of the year. My husband and I tried to go through the proper channels to get this alleviated. We first contacted...when they first started, when we first heard bulldozers coming in, we knew our view scape had changed forever. We thought maybe we could get used to that. When the turbines became fully operational in October of last year, we had prayed daily that we wouldn't be able to hear them. That was certainly dashed. On the 20th of December last year, we contacted the site manager. He said, I'll come up to your place. When we got out of his pickup you could tell he was surprised at what he was hearing. He apologized

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to us. He said, I didn't realize you were here because since we're a mile outside of the project, we're not considered in the project. He said, I'll see what I can do for you. We'll see what we can do to alleviate this problem. Two weeks later he was let go of his position. I e-mailed him and tried to get some information, but they placed a gag order on him. We've called the project manager more times than I care to even and I've got records. So we were forced to buy an expensive decibel meter at our home and these are logs of decibels that we take on a daily basis: what it sounds like, what direction the wind is from, and what the decibel ratings are. Holt County granted the CUP on 50 decibels, which I don't know if any of you have studied sound. I have learned. I had to and if you can tell me the difference between 35 decibels and 45 decibels. You think, well, that's ten decibels more. No, in sound that is ten times more decibels. So every time you jump up five decibels, it's five times more decibels. I've been in the project taking decibel readings. You can't get anything close to 50. Usually they're around 70 up to 98. At our property, they put out a slick binder that tells you the projections of what you should be hearing and not hearing. They're only projections until those turbines are built. They don't take into consideration how peaceful it was before, the atmospheric conditions, the topography. It's all based on projections. At our home, they had us projected to not hear more than 30-39. You're welcome to my studies but it's always over that. We rarely get anything other than that when the wind's not blowing. Our decibel meter also rates it on a C scale. The wind turbine people, all their studies are done on an A-rated scale which only takes in the midline sounds--nothing high, nothing low. C rating is also low sounds which I'm very susceptible to. I can actually in the winter when there's less ambient sounds, no tractors in the fields, very little traffic, no leaves on the trees, I can feel the pulsing of those turbines in my chest. As I stated earlier, we get very little sleep. Everybody says the health concerns are debunked, but I don't care to go into my health issues today. But I am having problems that I have never had in my life before. And I thank you for your consideration and your time. And if you ever have the chance to live by one, run. I didn't have the opportunity and it breaks my heart to think that everything we have worked our whole life for we may have to abandon or we may have to sell out. Thank you. [LR125]

SENATOR HUGHES: Thank you, Ms. May. Are there questions? [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: Are there any questions? [LR125]

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SENATOR WALZ: I was wondering if we could get a copy of that information. [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: Yes. It's a lot of pages and I can sure get it to you. [LR125]

SENATOR HUGHES: Okay. Any other questions? Senator Albrecht. [LR125]

SENATOR ALBRECHT: I thank you so much for sharing what you have because you are living it. They...the others that are here might not want to live it, but they already know what's coming. And, you know, I've just jotted down some notes from the previous folks, too, and I'm just probably airing my frustrations right now. So your husband served on the Planning Commission. [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: Yes. [LR125]

SENATOR ALBRECHT: And they promised you, somebody did, either at the county level or the planning level that it's okay, you're only going to be at 35-39 decibels. But if you have that documentation that it is much higher, you know, people don't want to have to spend their hard-earned dollars to sue somebody. But I'm sorry, I think we do have a responsibility in this room to be able to look into these type of things, because to have a gag order on somebody who's part of a project and I've already read the book. So I get all that you're talking about and I probably would have asked the other gentleman a few more questions. But in the time constraints that we have, I'm just wanting you to understand that planning and zoning have a huge say in whether something comes or goes. But if you're telling me that these projects come without the planning and zoning's approval or their county board's approval, and some places don't have planning boards, so if you had one that's a great thing. But there is documentation just like we have here today that they told you what you should expect and shouldn't expect. So with that, that might be one place to go is back to your county or your planning board... [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: We've tried. [LR125]

SENATOR ALBRECHT: ...whether it was your husband sitting there or not, but... [LR125]

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VICKIE MAY: We've tried. [LR125]

SENATOR ALBRECHT: But it's wrong, and you know what, as a state legislator, I'm really disturbed with what I'm hearing. And I'm even more disturbed if the public power has the ability to come in and put these lines down, whether the project is approved or not. Yours might have already been. Maybe they kissed the paper and there it went. [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: There's nothing to help us, but I want to help anybody else I can. And something I didn't get to is we also contacted Alicia Knapp, the project manager, Tom Budler who I think gave a presentation at noon to you people today. They've been to my home. And the conclusion of what they told me, I asked if we could have an independent sound study--absolutely not. [LR125]

SENATOR ALBRECHT: Why not? [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: They would use the people that they have always used. I asked them. I said, would you please provide me with that information so I can research them and see if I will get a fair shake out of this deal. That was on June 9 they were at my house. I am waiting yet today to get that information they promised me. And at the conclusion of that meeting, Alicia Knapp looked me in the eye and I said, just be honest with me here. What are we to do? She said you are to put up and you are to shut up. My own county commissioner told my husband and I that we are the collateral damage for the good of Holt County. That does little to help you get to sleep at night when those turbines are thumping. We've been back to our zoning administrator. We have asked for meetings. I don't know how many times we get shot down, every time. We can't change the regulations. We know they're going to come back for more turbines. We want to get the setback set back further. The wind company will tell you those turbines will slough ice up to a half a mile. Our county road setbacks are only have the diameter of one blade which is 90 feet. Do you want to be the one driving down the road when that thing decides to let go? There's someone else who's going to talk about how the fire departments are not able to go on to that property to fight a fire. They have to stay on the road. That does little good when there's grassland all to the south of me and I'm living to the north of that and that fire is coming at me. There are so many things that we need responsible setbacks. We need responsible decibels. But

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we let big wind come in and tell us how it's going to be. They wine and dine our county officials and they have what they call Windmill Wednesdays up there in Holt County where they have coffee and donuts on Wednesdays and they wine and dine them. They give them jackets with their names embroidered on them and stuff. When we do have meetings, our local officials sit with the wind turbine people. They don't sit with their constituents. So I'm here today just to ask any help that you can be because you would not want anyone in your family up to have to live like this. We were hoping to pass our land on to our children and grandchildren, but I don't know if we'll be able to stay. At what point should we have to make the decisions because my neighbor. And I believe in personal property rights and I'm a private person and I'm living, minding my own business. But you don't know how bad I wished I would have stuck my nose in a little bit further. [LR125]

SENATOR ALBRECHT: I appreciate your testimony. [LR125]

VICKIE MAY: Thank you. [LR125]

March 25, 2018

To Whom It May Concern;

September 22, 2017 I testified at a public hearing before the Natural Resources Committee in Lincoln Nebraska. I give my permission to read or reproduce this testimony.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vickie L. May". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

vickie L. May

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