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| October 2009

Your ref:  
Our ref: ET/148352

### **Assessing Potential Noise from Wind Turbines**

Dear Philip,

Thank you for your letter of 21 August, regarding your concerns about the guidance currently used for assessing potential noise from wind turbines. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I am pleased to read that you found our recent meeting very useful in terms of raising issues for discussion. I very much welcome Environmental Protection UK's support for the deployment of wind farms in order to meet our renewable energy targets. It is a huge challenge which will require a concerted effort from all sectors of society, and I am in no doubt about the key role that voluntary organisations can play.

You have made some very interesting points about the ETSU-R-97 guidance which is used for the assessment and rating of noise from wind farms. To respond to your main point, for reasons that I will outline below, we have no plans to revise ETSU-R-97 at this stage. However, we are very mindful of competing views about the noise impacts of wind farms and we are keeping an open mind on the application of the guidance.

To respond to your particular points, which, for ease of reference, were that a review of ETSU-R-97 was due because;

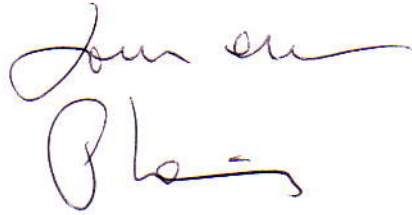
- a) Turbine height and blade sizes have increased significantly since the publication of ETSU-R-97; and
- b) a draft report by the HPA into Environmental Noise and Health calls for a different method of presenting results of noise exposure tests.

You're quite right that modern turbines are generally larger than those on which the ETSU-R-97 guidance was based. Noise outputs from these larger turbines have also, however, reduced in that time. Since the ETSU-R-97 derived noise limits are a function of background noise, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the larger turbines are any more likely to cause a noise impact than earlier and smaller designs. Similarly, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the small incidence of Amplitude Modulation (AM) that is reported to occur at a few sites is as a result of turbine size.

Thank you for drawing my attention to the HPA report "Environmental Noise and Health in the UK". This was published in July 2009 as a "draft for comment" document. It contains a report drafted by members of an ad-hoc Expert Group, and does not necessarily reflect the views of the UK Government. However, I hope you'll be reassured that we will consider the recommendations made in the report, and the consultation comments received, in due course.

In essence, therefore, we continue to support the approach set out in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 22 - Renewable Energy, including the use of ETSU-R-97 to "ensure that renewable energy developments have been located and designed in such a way to minimise increases in ambient noise levels".

I hope that this helps to clarify the Government's position.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John H. OBE". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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**THE RT HON LORD HUNT OF KINGS HEATH OBE**