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Mighty River Power – Turitea wind farm project

***Representation From Robert John & Tania
Rochelle Buwalda***

**Objection on Natural Environmental Effects, Social and Cultural
Effects and Amenity Effects.**

Representation Opposing the Turitea Wind Farm Project.

Robert John Buwalda,

I am at present employed at Fonterra Research Centre as a Senior Technical Officer. I have been employed by Fonterra and its predecessor Dairy Research Institute since 1981 and have been actively involved in the development of new products and the technical support in our dairy industry.

I Robert John Buwalda oppose the Turitea Wind Farm on the grounds it will affect my family and the wider community on the following grounds.

- 1) The environmental effects on the Turitea reserve both during construction and longer term.
- 2) The Social and Cultural effects of the scheme with heavy industrial use of Kahuterawa Road and the up grading of Greens Road and Farm Access Road.
- 3) The short and long term effects this scheme will have on the amenity value and desirability for purchase of properties within the area affected by this Project,

1) Environmental Effects of the Turitea Wind Farm Project

The Turitea Reserve is not only a major water catchment for the Palmerston North City, but is also a green belt that is home to an array of native Flora and Fauna.

By the past policy of the Palmerston North City Council of limiting access to this area, the disturbance to these plant and fauna has been minimised.

This has given this area a natural environment for rare and endangered species to flourish with various native trees and shrubs. *The tawa/podocarp forest represents the best quality native bush of any kind in the Manawatu.*

Just 10 minutes from Fitzherbert Bridge you can be amongst native bush containing trees hundreds of year's old and native birds rarely seen anywhere else in the Manawatu.

The encroachment into this area for industrial development of this wind farm and then longer term maintenance will disrupt and destroy some habitats within this reserve.

The consents state earth works will be bunded to limit or reduce silting into the water catchment.

But the fill removed to create the foundation site has to be spread across a large area.

This will disrupt if not destroy the habitat that was existing before the development. This area is subject to occasional large volumes of rainfall and the temporary bunding would not be able to contain this.

This would endanger both the Palmerston North water catchment and also the natural environment that exists at present.

The un-named tributary of the Kahuterawa stream that would require extensive earthworks to create a crossing would destroy a significant area of native forest. Shame for even considering this option.

Also with access less difficult, there is more opportunity for mis-use of this area. Would it not be better to develop this area as a heritage area where our native flora and fauna may be protected?

As a nation we are critical of deforestation of the rain forests of Asia and Amazon areas, but now we are going to destroy an area of green belt close to our city.

2) The Social and Cultural effects of the scheme due to heavy industrial use of Kahuterawa Road and the up grading of Greens Road and the Farm Access track.

Kahuterawa Road is and has been for decades a rural area and more recently utilised as an access to an amenity area.

The City Council has been developing on this objective by closing the vehicular through access of Turitea Road to Greens Road to limit unnecessary traffic. The Palmerston North City Council has purchased a forestry block at the southern end of Kahuterawa Road for public use of walkers and cycling and upgraded the walking tracks to the Platinum mine.

Both the Turitea Dam block circuit (Turitea Road through to Greens Road) for local runners, walkers and cyclists, and the Kahuterawa Loop, which has national status for mountain bikers will be disrupted by the construction and long term maintenance of this wind farm

We purchase our property approx 22 years ago in this area because Kahuterawa Road was a rural area within a short distance from the city.

We had looked at Turitea Rd but did not like the zoning that was already in existence. It has some residential zoning.

Kahuterawa Rd was rural residential with a minimum subdivision and has had a recreational slant to its development that enhances its appeal due to the amenities available within its boundaries.

The occasional new house development or roading maintenance does not disrupt this character.

The Kahuterawa valley population almost totally objected recently to a proposal to site a function centre within this area. The proposers to that facility had not anticipated this. We do not want this area to be compromised by a large scale development.

Most of the population of Kahuterawa Road moved here to have a rural lifestyle, and appreciate that privilege.

We know most of the residents that are long term residents and this stability enhances the appeal of the road.

Our family has a lifestyle that is to be envied. I do not want it destroyed by an installation that does not fit in with the character of the area.

The Turitea Wind Farm does not fit within our lifestyle expectations from both the short term construction and the longer term maintenance. (Or the visual and noise disruption associated with a wind farm.)

The longer term visual disruption and noise effects will adversely affect both the amenity and the saleable value of this area.

This already has been noticed where properties have sat on the market for extended periods even before the down turn once the proposal was announced.

Eg. A property subdivision near us has been on market for nearly two years without a single site sold.

It has already been noted that the noise disturbance from the wind farm at Te Rara Hau has caused issues to neighbouring properties despite assurances in their resource consents that these would not be an issue.

Will this wind farm be stopped if noise is an issue? I doubt it.

Road Use

Would you, with a young family, choose to live on a road which is essentially a main access route for a major industrial development, where trucks are able to travel at open road speeds?

Kahuterawa Road is a small rural road with a width of approx 5.6m over most of its length to Greens Road.

Heavy construction trucks are up to 2.5 m plus mirrors of approx 0.3m.

This means a truck will be 2.8m wide plus overhang on left edge of 0.3m.

Two trucks passing in opposite directions will not be able to negotiate some sections of this road without one or both of the trucks having their left wheels on the grass verge.

The verge is less than 0.7m for extended lengths in some parts of Kahuterawa Road...

A truck and trailer carrying construction materials whether being cement, steel or other needed supplies will have cut in.(where rear axles cuts a corner tighter than the steering axle.)

This cut in will on some of the corners may be in excess of a metre depending on the axle configuration and the length of truck and trailer.

There is not this amount of road available. Therefore they have to drive wide on approach to some corners.

This has not been a major problem in the past because the rural contractors such as stock trucks often leave their trailer at the main road.

For other contractors the use has been only for short periods and awareness of the situation has given rise to some safety.

The winding nature of Kahuterawa Road with short verges means it will not be a safe option for the transportation of materials to the Wind Farm site.

Two trucks with trailers will not have width to pass each other without significant deviation onto the verge, which is negligible in places.

We note that a resource consent for the quarry near us (Kendells Line) has only a approximation for the number of truck movements.

The residents of that road complained but were not able to action this complaint due to the movements had been approximately estimated in the consent. Therefore this could not be legally challenged when the truck movements multiplied by a factor more than on the consent.

We do not want this to happen on Kahuterawa Road. We want actual figures to be made public so they may be discussed and the impact known.

I am a regular cyclist utilizing the Kahuterawa road to minimise the use of a vehicle for transportation to work .I cycle at least four days a week.

I also utilise the road for amenity cycling after work and on weekends where I cycle with my wife and children.

My wife cycles with eldest daughter (14 yrs old) to meet the school bus on fine days. We do this for financial, health and ecological reasons.

In one and a half years we will have two children cycling to meet the school bus.(the next child is 11 yrs old now)

We will not be able to cycle during the construction phase as it would be not safe.

But with the proposed density of truck traffic on the road, small vehicles may not be safe either.

A Concrete truck last Saturday negotiated the road to a neighbour. It needed the full half width of road from white line to grass verge. I passed in the opposite direction towing an 8x5 trailer. I needed my left wheels of the trailer at the grass verge to safely pass this vehicle. This occurred on the straight section approx 1 km from the Old West road junction. As the truck negotiated the hill by our property it spilled concrete from the barrel due to the camber of the road on the rise of the hill. This situation would not be safe in multiple vehicle situations where heavy vehicles need to utilise more than half the road to safely negotiate sections of road.

We appreciate that there will be a batching plant within the construction site, but to establish this site there may be need to have multiple truck loads of concrete transported to the site.

On Monday 31/08/2009 a truck and trailer unit utilised Kahuterawa Rd. It too needed more than half the road to negotiate the restricted speed corner approx 1.9km from the main road. This is not a safe option if traffic density were to be increased, but there is no verge for the trailer cut in so the truck has to start crossing the white line to negotiate this corner.

Would a fully laden truck be able to stop within half its visible distance when negotiating Kahuterawa Road?

This is not a question of if there will be a serious accident but a question of how many.

Within the Mighty River application only vague statistics are given on truck frequency and load weights.

We asked at the recent roading meeting about traffic density and also a speed limit. The traffic density was replied with vague averages and the speed issue was negated as too hard to manage.

How are we able to make objective decisions without real data and facts?
Under normal daily use heavy trucks are not regular users of the road.
It was not designed or built to withstand the damage that these trucks will cause.
Who will repair this damage?

Will we have to pay with increased rates to pay for the wind farm that wasn't wanted or will the power company pay for the roading maintenance?

Will this road be an extension of the work site?
This would mean it would be covered by the OSH legislation.
This would govern road speed and traffic density and visibility issues.
But would this even guarantee our safety on the road.

I was told that one of the main reasons for stopping the School Bus coming up Kahuterwa Road was the difficulty the buses had negotiating the corners.

We are a Home School Family.

My wife is home schooling our children until the start of Secondary School. As I have mentioned, we have one that has just started Secondary school, so is cycling on fine days to meet the school bus at the Old West Road junction. But there are also two more children at home. We live at base of the rise approx 2.6km from the junction of Old West Road. This rise would be as steep for vehicles as Massey University hill. The disruption caused by the heavy traffic utilising Kahuterawa Road cannot be under estimated.

Younger persons are more likely to be distracted by noise from their school work. The vehicles will either be under load changing down in gear moving up the hill beside our property or utilising exhaust brakes, travelling down the hill. This type of noise has a penetrating pitch. This noise will be disruptive to normal home activities. Our family is at home during the day.

The sound of heavy traffic constantly moving on a small country road or the low frequency noise of the turbines does not fit in with a rural lifestyle. We are already looking at alternative living arrangements if this scheme were to go ahead.

It would involve the relocation of our house to the back part of our property. This would reduce the traffic noise within our home, but not reduce the risk of the

increased road usage during construction or the long term low frequency noise generated by the turbines.

After the construction stage the road may not be safe due to increased use of the road by service vehicles for the wind farm or from other than existing amenity users who will have access to areas that were not easily accessible before. Also it will have lost its rural aspect and appeal.

Greens Road has been an amenity road with a growing patronage of cyclists and runners.

It also had an ascetic value in being both gravel and having overhanging trees. By widening and tar sealing this road these values will be lost for ever.

All the owners of properties on the road had bought when the road was in this unformed state, and have knowingly bought without the expectation it would be improved.

The private farm access that will be utilised was originally a tram way for the removal of timber in the early development of the Manawatu.

To read about and having spoken to the son / grandson of one of these men of the efforts building this tram way and then the skill of the men that operated this line for the removal of the timber is in some ways a inspiration for us to follow.

By widening this access, this heritage will be lost for ever.

If this farm access way is viewed from the city, it will be noted how even and uniform the angle of ascent is.

Though widened slightly by the present owner the original line was not disturbed.

This line of ascent was all achieved by eye from the early construction team.

This is a piece of Palmerston North heritage that should be preserved, not destroyed.

3) Effects on Amenity Values of the area.

The ridge line to the hills behind Palmerston North has only one area of Native Bush. The other area of forest to the north has recently been reduced and now has a wind farm.

This Turitea area of native bush should be preserved for our children and their children.

To drive from the city and view this area is something that should be protected. Sustainable energy is to be advocated, but should be achieved without compromising the amenity value of our remaining native bush.

The cycling that has evolved at woodpecker forest has become a national competition site.

If the area becomes festooned in turbines it may lose its appeal.

Rotorua has major cycling events that are undertaken within the forestry/ bush area surrounding their city. These events bring a lot of people and therefore dollars into their community.

We should be looking at enhancing what we have to attract more of these events to our city. But instead we may be potentially changing the landscape and then losing the appeal to encourage these events to the area.

I am for renewable energy, I try to minimise the use of non renewable fossil fuels. We have planted substantially more trees on our property than we will ever utilise for the heating of our home. We have planted both amenity and added value hard wood trees. (approx 2000 total of , redwoods, leyland cypress ,gum,and natives such as kahikatea, rimu, totora as well as flax and pittosporum)
Our electrical account is lower on unit usage than it was twenty years ago as we have become more efficient despite having three children now.

But I also want to see our heritage maintained.

This Turitea Wind Farm will destroy some of our heritage by destroying large areas of native bush and altering roading and access ways that were part of our history. It will become visual disruption of our ridge line. And it has already potentially affected the value of lifestyle properties.

Properties within Kahuterawa Road have lost appeal because of negative public perception of this wind farm project.

To drive from Palmerston North toward the Gorge, it has become festooned with turbines. This has become visual pollution.

When the first wind farm was developed it was good. But now we have a density of turbines that is a distraction from the natural beauty of our ridge line. Any more is more visual distraction.

If we look through the number and details of the submissions, there are considerably more opponents than supporters of the scheme.

The noise that will be produced is not a natural noise fitting in a rural environment. Also this noise will not be able to be controlled.

Kahuterawa valley has its own micro climate. The wind directions within the valley are not as they are elsewhere within the Manawatu. Even when there is a westerly, there is sometimes a wind swirl within the valley. Therefore we will be subjected to the noise from these turbines when other areas may not be.

Overseas, the siting of Wind Turbines for power generation has come under closer scrutiny.

There are instances where turbines are being removed due to public pressure. eg in Holland

They are now being placed away from where the general public view.

There is also a greater awareness that renewable energy should not cost the environment in the long term.

Why is New Zealand not learning from the learning's of these European countries and siting the wind turbines away from public amenity value areas and questioning the real environmental cost of installation.

We have noted that employees of the wind farm projects choose not to live in Kahuterawa Rd area.

Would you allow your families to be subjected to the potential for harm that the road utilisation would cause?

The closest turbine is potentially within 3 km of our house.

That will mean we will be affected by the noise pollution that this project will produce.

This winter we have noted that the ground water level is extremely low compared to other years at this time.

This may mean a lower than normal soil moisture level during summer.(if we do not have considerably more rainfall before summer)

If this is the case during construction, what measures would be taken to reduce the fire risk within the construction zone.

The consequences of a fire in that region (the Turitea reserve) would be catastrophic.

4) Conclusion.

I am objecting to the proposal to establish a wind farm in the Turitea area.

I feel that the negative effects on the local population and environment are greater than the potential increase in renewable energy generated from this site.

The impact of the construction and longer term maintenance on this site will detrimentally affect the ecology of the Turitea reserve and the heritage of the area.

The safety of the valley users will be compromised during the construction stage and also potentially longer term with the increased road usage.

The visual impact and the noise pollution will adversely affect the long term financial and amenity value and desirability of the properties within the area proposed.

We have natural noise within the valley. Not a man made continuous artificial noise.

Would you choose to live in this situation?

I would like to see the following turbines removed from the scheme:

From the Browns Flat West

111,112,113,114,119,121,122,52,123,124,125,

From the Love Property

54,55,134,135,136,127,128,129,10,131,132,133,

From Bryants Hill

74,75,76,77,78,82,83,84,85,86,87,88,

But I would also object in principle to those turbines that are within the Palmerston North City Council Reserve at Turitea.

Thankyou for your time

Robert & Tania Buwalda and family

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