



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Renewable Energy

SPEECH

Monday, 18 June 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Monday, 18 June 2012 Page 185 Questioner Speaker Kelly, Craig, MP</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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Mr CRAIG KELLY (Hughes) (20:13): I welcome this motion moved by the member for La Trobe, for this motion gives the House an opportunity to take a reality check and to examine the effects and the costs of diverting our nation's scarce and precious resources into subsidising industrial wind farms. Firstly, far from state planning regulations being unreasonably restrictive on wind farm developments, as this motion claims, the states have so far abjectly failed to protect our rural communities, by having planning regulations and noise guidelines so lax as to be perfectly biased in favour of inappropriately sited wind farms. This motion displays a complete contempt for the rural people of Australia, many of whom are unlucky enough to be situated in areas where wind turbines could potentially be located.

Back in 2005, the United Nations Environment Program, with one of those 'the science is settled' predictions, asserted that global warming would create millions of climate change refugees. By 2010, it was said, these people would be forced to flee their homes because of rising sea levels from melting ice caps. Well, 2010 has come and gone and there has not been a single person made a climate refugee because of rising sea levels. However, here in Australia we now have some of the world's first climate refugees, forced to flee their homes not by rising sea levels but by government policies subsidising industrial wind turbines. Dr Sarah Laurie has documented over 20 Australian families who have been forced to flee their homes in Victoria alone because of wind turbine noise and infrasound. Dr Laurie states:

... current noise guidelines are completely inadequate to protect people's health because they do not involve measurement of infrasound and low frequency noise.

Today I received a letter from Mrs Pamela Connelly, an Australian climate change refugee forced to flee her home because of inadequate planning regulations which have allowed wind farms to be built too close to her home. I would like to read her letter:

I am writing to share with you our personal experience of living for three years alongside (1.2 km away) a Pacific Hydro wind turbine and more importantly the contrast after having lived away from them for 18 months.

The first time the turbines started to turn ... imagine our shock of hearing a constant sort of jet engine/sonic boom whooshing sound and more annoyingly feeling a vibration sometimes in our chest bone every second or so.

When the turbines were at their worst, this noise continued day and night even through closed double glazed windows. I recall sitting on the couch on one of those earlier nights and amazed that not only could I clearly hear the turbines, but also feel the wave of vibrations every second or so through my whole body.

Another thing that increased very gradually was headaches, and in the last year or so I was taking Nurofen migraine tablets regularly ... The headaches were sometimes so bad that unarmed with Nurofen, the migraines were completely debilitating ... These headaches stopped straight away after moving away and in the past 18 months I have only taken two Nurofen tablets.

Mrs Connelly continues:

We asked at a meeting Pacific Hydro for written proof that it was safe for the health of us and more importantly our children but this could not be supplied.

On further questioning to Pacific Hydro at a meeting at our house we were told no further testing was needed—and nothing could be done. She continues:

It is not until you move away from the turbines that you realise the profound effect that they had on you. You don't particularly connect the symptoms to the wind turbines because they very gradually build up over time and

you put it down to co-incidence or anything as you really don't want to believe that staying where you love is making you unwell, it really only becomes clear in a short time after you leave the vicinity of the turbines how much of an effect they were having on you when the symptoms disappear.

So to the member who bought this motion I say, 'Shame,' for your motion seeks to inflict the type of pain and suffering experienced by Mrs Connelly on hundreds if not thousands of rural Australians and strip away their property rights and force them out of their homes.

This motion also farcically talks about considerable opportunities for increased employment in connection with the construction of wind turbines. This is a complete fallacy. Wind turbines are ludicrously inefficient. Let us not lie about the costs. The electricity they produce is 500 per cent more expensive than electricity produced by coal-fired plants. Simply because of their inefficiency, no one would invest in wind turbines unless they were guaranteed some type of government handout or special government privilege.

Ms O'Neill: Seventeen billion.

Mr CRAIG KELLY: That is right. But these government handouts have to be paid by someone. That is something the Labor party does not understand. They are paid by families through higher electricity prices. They are paid by families, by factories, by hospitals, by schools, by offices, by churches and by retail shops. They are the people that pay the price of these policies.

So what this motion actually seeks to do is to promote the interest of wind farm developers—either the union-controlled Pacific Hydro or foreign multinationals—at the expense of Australian families and businesses. The evidence from overseas is clear. While the member for La Trobe may talk about the wonderful jobs that they create, we also have to look at the jobs they destroy. The evidence, as I said, from overseas is clear: policies to subsidise wind and solar power have proven an absolute disaster in Germany, Denmark and Spain, where it has been calculated that, for every 'green' job that is created, in the real economy it has destroyed 2.2 jobs. A recent Verso study in the UK has found these types of subsidies destroy 3.7 jobs for every green job created. It is clear—for every wind turbine constructed in our country, jobs are lost, our nation's prosperity is reduced, we become less competitive and costs of living become higher. As Henry Ergas pointed out today:

NEXT year, each man, woman and child in this country will pay \$450 in electricity charges for "green schemes"...

That totals, across the economy, \$10 billion. For a mother raising three young kids, that is \$1,800 it will cost them in the next year alone in electricity prices.

We need to consider the opportunity costs of subsidising hopelessly inefficient wind turbines. We live in a world where billions go to bed hungry at night. We live in a world where millions will die this year from particulate and water pollution. We in this parliament have to try and find \$8 billion a year to fund our National Disability Insurance Scheme. No-one will ever know what new products, what new processes or what medical breakthroughs will have failed to come into existence, killed before they were born, because of the diversion of our nation's precious, valuable resources into wind turbines. No-one will ever be able to compute the price that we all will pay for this public policy failure, keeping our standard of living lower than it would otherwise have been.

And for what? What is this for; what is the entire point? Well, members on the other side often regurgitate that delusional phrase: 'We are taking action on climate change.' Firstly, we need to be clear how little power wind turbines actually produce. You would need 3,500 giant steel windmills to produce the equivalent output of one single, medium-sized conventional coal or gas fired power station. Secondly, even if we built these 3,500 steel windmills, we would still need a gas fired power station as a backup—for when the wind doesn't blow, the power doesn't flow. It is that simple. And of course any gas fired backup power station needs to be ramped up and down to compensate for the intermittency of the wind. A gas fired plant runs inefficiently, burning more gas and having a shorter life span than a plant which is just working normally. It is like a car battling through heavy traffic—less fuel efficiency and more wear and tear. Overseas studies have suggested that we could actually lower our emissions of carbon dioxide if we did away with wind turbines altogether and just ran gas power stations inefficiently.

We have beautiful country landscapes around our nation, from Beaudesert to Boorowa, magnificent horse-riding trails and picturesque vistas. We can desecrate these landscapes by covering them with giant steel industrial wind turbines for as far as the eye can see, but it is not going to do anything to change the temperature of the globe and

it not going to have any measurable effect on levels of carbon dioxide. To do so would be a recipe for retarding economic growth, increasing poverty and harming human health. That is what this motion seeks to do. By any analysis, this motion is to support a public policy disaster. *(Time expired)*