

The Japanese Conference against Big Wind April 30. 2010

The Japanese Conference against Big Wind was held on April 30 in Tokyo. Victims of low frequency noise from wind turbines and protesters against additional wind turbines gathered from all over Japan. More than 100 people came and 6 people gave speeches.

1. OKAWA, Tsuyoshi (Tahara-city, Aichi-prefecture)

He is a farmer living on Atsumi Peninsula. His house is near a wind turbine (1,500kW), which was built in July 2007. There are three houses (including his) within 350m of the turbine.

He has been suffering from the turbine's low frequency noise since it began turning. He had never been told about the noise by the wind power company (M & D Green Energy). He asked the company and Tahara-city to measure the noise level. The conclusion of the measurement was "There is no problem".

He and his family had to sleep at a hotel far from the turbine. Now they stay in their house in the daytime and sleep in an apartment far from turbine at night.

There is no regulation on low frequency noise in Japan.

2. KAWASUMI, Toru (Higashiizu-town, Shizuoka-prefecture)

He and his wife moved to this quiet town from Tokyo to take care of his mother in 1992. Ten turbines (1,500kW each) were built near his house in December 2007 despite his and his neighbors protesting against the construction.

Right after the ten turbines began the test runs, his neighbors suffered from the turbines' low frequency noise. In July 2009 they applied to the Environmental Disputes Coordination Commission for a Cause Adjudication on the noise. In March 2010 the first inquiry was held.

80% of the residents are complaining about headaches and sleep disturbances. Their symptoms disappear when the turbines stop.

3. OIWA, Yasuhisa (Ikata-town, Ehime-prefecture)

He is a farmer who lives at the tip of Sada-misaki peninsula. On Japan's narrowest peninsula 20 turbines (1,000kW each) were built in November 2006. His house is only 200m from a turbine. He and his neighbors have suffered from headache, sleep disturbance and other adverse health effects since the turbines were placed in operation.

After they began operating, it came to light that the wind power company (Marubeni) made up the noise data measured before the construction. Marubeni asked an acoustician to make a report on the noise measurement. It says, "This noise level never affects human health."

4. GOTO, Michiko (Otaru-city, Hokkaido-prefecture)

In 2009 people of the city knew of the plan to build 20 wind turbines (2,000kW each) at Zenibako coast in Oataru. The coast has dunes, wetlands and natural Kashiwa oak trees. She believes the bio-diversity has to be protected. She and her husband made a citizen group against the construction and let people know how big wind turbines could destroy their nature.

The planned area is near Sapporo which is the biggest city in Hokkaido. She worries if the low frequency noise will affect people in Sapporo. But the wind power company (Japan Wind Development) didn't give any information to Sapporo citizens.

5. KONTAJI, Harumi (Tsuruga-city, Fukui-prefecture)

She is a member of Tsuruga city assembly and has been an activist against environmental problems. A construction plan for 12 wind turbines (2,000kW each) appeared in Tsuruga-city and Echizen-town (next to Tsuruga) in 2006. In Japan wind power companies have to get agreement of mayors of planned areas to apply for a government subsidy. But the company (Clean Energy Factory) applied without mayors' agreement. Ms. KONTAJI criticized the company at city assembly. Then mayor of Tsuruta-city decided to refuse the agreement. The plan stopped because the company couldn't get the subsidy.

Since Tsuruga-city has nuclear power plants, people are very sensitive to environmental problems. They also have protested against an industrial waste landfill project.

6. TAKEDA, Keise (Nabari-city, Mie-prefecture)

He is a dentist and a member of Wild Bird Society of Japan. He lives near Aoyama Plateau. There are 42 wind turbines, 9 are under construction and 46 more are planned on the Plateau.

He surveyed the influence of wind turbines on wild birds in Aoyama Plateau. The result is that the number of wild birds greatly decreased near wind turbines.

Since nobody lives near Aoyama plateau wind turbines, it is said this area is a good example of wind power development. But it includes a quasi-national park and is full of nature.

He also insists that it is difficult to believe wind turbines are useful to reduce CO2 because they are so fragile to strong wind and thunder.

TV news programs and newspaper journalists came to cover the conference. It seems that 20% of attendants came from Big Wind. They might be sensitive to citizens' movement.

At the end of the conference The Tokyo Manifesto 2010 was adopted.

Yuki Tsuruta Oike