



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba
Katy Clark MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for West Scotland Region

Gillian Martin MSP
Minister for Energy and the Environment
Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
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26th June 2023

Guidance on low frequency noise and wind turbines

Dear Gillian,

I am writing to you following the debate on a “Just Transition for Rural Communities” which took place in the Scottish Parliament on 20 June 2023.

As I said in the debate, I fully support the need for a rapid expansion of the renewables sector given Scotland's climate targets and future energy needs. However, this expansion cannot be done without the support of local communities and clear benefits for local people, and that means addressing issues such as the ownership of much of the renewables sector and undertaking proper scrutiny of developers.

In North Ayrshire, you will be aware that there have been notable community campaigns against the Rigghill wind farm and Cumbrae solar farm proposals. I would be grateful if you could outline how National Planning Framework 4 and planning law more generally will enable the voices of local communities to be heard in relation to future proposed renewables developments.

I note that you outlined in the debate that the Scottish Government had supported a UK-wide review of the ETSU-R-97 regulations on all new onshore wind farm developments. You will recall that I raised some of the issues that constituents have experienced over an extended period about low-frequency noise being emitted from not just wind turbines, but also drill ships and a range of other industrial developments. I would appreciate if you could provide an update on how discussions with the UK Government on reviewing ETSU-R-97 regulations and associated guidance are progressing.

However, I am sure you will agree that as I set out in the debate that there is a need to go further in relation to measuring the noise effects of wind turbines. Regulations are now out of date with the last guidance issued to local authorities on low frequency noise being in 2005 from the then Scottish Executive.

This is despite research having been produced since 2005 which shows the detrimental impact that low frequency noise can have on the lives of individuals. In 2011, a report by the University of Salford for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in relation to the proposed criteria for the assessment of low-frequency noise disturbance

highlighted that individuals had experienced sleep disturbance, stress, headaches, migraines, and severe mental health issues which they attributed to low-frequency noise.

I am sure you will agree that there is a need to provide updated guidance to local authorities on low frequency noise given this evidence base.

I would appreciate if you could outline whether the Scottish Government will, indeed, commit to updating this guidance and undertaking further research into the impact of low frequency noise on individuals and communities across Scotland.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



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