

Good morning. My name is Cathryn Stillings and my husband and I live in Grand Prairie Township and have wind turbines on three sides of our farmstead.

We bought our place in the fall, a year and a half ago. What we saw then was a charming old property that seemed to belong to another world, to a time that existed before the rush and pressure of our modern era. Although we're on a paved road, we had no traffic, and the windbreaks of tall evergreens surrounding our little farmstead gave us a sense of security and peace. We willingly traded away the conveniences of town living for a chance to experience this remarkable sense of space and stillness that speaks to us out on the prairie.

All that has changed now. About a year ago the turbines started going up in this area and we had more traffic than we had ever had in town. We put new locks on our doors and tried to ignore the activity. More turbines are being erected up the road from us, so I suppose this summer will be busy again.

For me the worst part of it is the relentless noise. Sometimes I get to feeling rather desperate--it's sort of like having the tv blaring away night and day, and there's no way to shut it off. The sound has a rhythmic, pulsing quality that sort of grinds away, as if it were a huge machine cutting through something but never quite getting the job done. The noise isn't loud all the time. But I would say it's uncomfortably loud more of the time than not.

I've been outside a lot this spring, putting in a garden. I try to concentrate on other "layers" of sound--the chirps and buzzes, birdsongs and bugs, that are so soothing and that I used to take for granted. Now they have to compete with this grinding roar.

At night I use earplugs. The windows in our bedroom open in the direction of the turbines, and the turbines never rest. People though are not designed like machines. People need rest, and we need quiet in order to rest well.

The only way I have found to have some relief from the noise is to go into our chicken coop. We are remodelling it to make a work space, and have put in a lot of insulation. With the door closed, I have found it to be the quietest place on the farm. It is good to have this, but it makes me sad to think what we have lost.

Please include my comments on the official record.