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Children & Fetus and other vulnerable groups are affected by nearby Industrial Wind Energy Facility Noise

Part Two, For Health: Your Choice column, by Cheryl La Rocque

A TWO Part Column Series (Sept. 9/13 was Part One, and, Sept 16/13 is Part Two)

PART TWO -- INDUSTRIAL WIND ENERGY FACILITIES and Vulnerable groups

Families living near industrial wind energy facilities (IWEF) should be aware of the concerns related to noise emissions and the impact these energy facilities can have on children, fetus or other vulnerable family members.

Dr. Niemann (et al) indicated in an article published in Noise Health 2006: with children the effects of noise induced annoyance from traffic, as well as neighbourhood noise, are evident in the respiratory system. The increased risk of illness in the respiratory system in children does not seem to be caused primarily by air pollutants, but rather, as the results for neighbourhood noise and demonstrated by emotional stress.

Excerpts from a fact sheet from the World Health Organization states:

Noise is an underestimated threat that can cause a number of short- and long-term health problems, such as sleep disturbance, cardiovascular effects, poorer work and school performance, and hearing impairment.

Some groups are more vulnerable to noise. As children spend more time in bed than adults, they are more exposed to night noise... and can lead to increase in medical visits.

The gap between rich and poor is likely to increase if governments fail to address noise pollution.

Impairment of early childhood development and education caused by noise may have lifelong effects on academic achievement and health.

There are studies and statistics on the negative impact of chronic exposure from noise on children which have found the following:

- * Consistent evidence that noise exposure harms cognitive performance.
- * Consistent association with impaired well-being.
- * Moderate evidence of effects on blood pressure and catecholamine hormone secretion.

Excerpts from The World Health Organization's "Training Package for the Health Sector" on "Children and Noise" identify vulnerabilities:

VULNERABLE GROUPS OF CHILDREN:

- * The fetus and babies.
- * Preterm, low birth weight and small for gestational age babies.
- * Children with dyslexia, hyperactivity, and attention difficulties.
- * Children on ototoxic medication.
- * Those with developmental and learning disabilities are also at risk.

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