



Grain Producers SA



23 October 2013

Mr Simon Neldner
Principal Planning Officer
Department of Planning and Local Government
via email

Dear Sir

This Submission is tendered as opposition to the Ceres wind farm development as proposed by Yorke Peninsula Wind Farm Project Pty. Ltd. It comes from Grain Producers SA Ltd, as recommended by its Agricultural Security and Priority Committee.

The objection to this “Development” is NOT to the principle of wind energy, BUT to the placement of wind turbines in an intensive agriculture region where a long established, successful, and ever improving industry is already renowned and entrenched. To call this proposal “development” makes a travesty of the word, since the placement of wind turbines amongst an area of advanced and intensive grain production will adversely affect the industry that is already thriving. If it is the wish of State and Federal Governments to develop agricultural land, and particularly, the fertile and reliable region of Yorke Peninsula, then their attention could be drawn to road infrastructure, and investment into agricultural research to at least enable grains production to stay ahead of its international competitors. A report from Deloitte Access Economics earlier this month identified Agribusiness in the five “super-growth” sectors of the next 20 years. The demand for protein based food from Asia’s middle classes was cited as a significant growth area, and this is a demand that SA grain producers can develop and fulfil.

Wind turbines amongst land used for intensive grains production will irrevocably impinge upon crop management practises. Timeliness of crop nutrition, and the application of crop protection products, is critical in maximising productivity and profitability in agriculture. To this end, aerial applications of fertilisers for nutrition, and herbicides, fungicides and insecticides for crop protection and quality, are the key to efficient and rapid management decisions as weather patterns and rainfall events unfold. Imported pests, such as Italian snails, are contained by aerial baiting of large areas of land when small windows of opportunity are presented for this practice to be effective. To restrict and deny aerial access to the cropping lands of those grain producers on whose properties wind turbines are placed, or are adjacent to such structures, is an impost on grain production that ground based machinery cannot compensate for. It is also a major concern, though the effects cannot be calculated or modelled, that turbulence caused by rotating turbines has the capacity to cause drift onto neighbouring crops or properties. Who, then, bears responsibility for that situation?

A further implication of restricted access to aviation within the area of a windfarm, is the matter of fire-fighting with aerial bombers. The harvesting of South Australia's grain crops occurs from late October to early January, and within this period, immense numbers of complicated machines operate in conditions of heat, dust, and low humidity. With the district intensity of cropping as found on Yorke Peninsula, accidental fire outbreaks are a constant threat. Whilst ground based fire fighting units are essential for perimeter fire extinguishment, and "mopping up", aerial water bombing has proved to be an integral part of rapid fire control because the aeroplane can get access to the head of the fire where no ground rig can go. Again, to restrict or deny this access and privilege to those encumbered by windfarms, is a matter that has potential legal ramifications, as well as the personal trauma of those who are faced with this dilemma.

Intensive grain growing in SA is assisted intrinsically by a satellite guided Global Positioning System (GPS). Inter-row sowing to reduce root diseases and allow for sustainable stubble retention farming, controlled traffic navigation to reduce compaction and crop damage, and the use of the GPS information to plot crop production "maps" for future management and planning decisions, are part of the grain production scenario. GPSA knows of no definitive study that can guarantee that grain growers working amongst wind turbines will not have their satellite signals affected by such towers. Again, if they are, who is responsible?

GPSA opposes the establishment of windfarms where there is an imposition and impediment indiscriminately placed upon the production of grains, and where there is prior and intensive useage of that land. With but 5% of the SA land mass being currently suitable for grains production, and with the particular farming region around Curramulka, Yorke Peninsula, having no remarkable degree of "windiness", as well as not being in proximity to any electricity feeder line, it seems ludicrous that a heavily subsidised new industry should be imposed upon an industry that has financed and buttressed SA for 130 years or more.

Further, GPSA takes issue with the burden that such proposals as the Ceres Project cast upon those people threatened by this encroachment. The harmony of daily living has been violated by the necessity to commit vast amounts of time and intellect, and personal finances, into the cause of refuting the claims of the project proponents, and arguing a case to defend their security and their future. GPSA supports those fellow grain producers, who at great personal cost financially, business-wise, and emotionally, resist the incursion of an opportunistic and flawed project onto their grain producing endeavours. The already existing industry, its infrastructure, AND its people, deserve to be protected, encouraged, and supported.

Yours sincerely



Darren Arney
CEO
Grain Producers SA Ltd