

The city's water supply should be of paramount concern to the city at large. Worldwide, safe, potable water has become a serious issue. Here in Palmerston North we have a unique situation where the ecologically sensitive Turitea catchment is under the threat of a huge wind farm development, which dwarfs the wind farms North of the Pahiatua track. Recently I was able to make a presentation to PNCC which addressed a number of issues relating to this ill considered proposal. Firstly readers may be unaware that turbines can catch fire as a result of mechanical failure, friction or lightning strike. As they are made of fibre glass composites they burn freely and a fire on a 125m high turbine is impossible to put out. Youtube is a good source for video of giant turbines both on fire and dramatically imploding. The risk to a tinder dry Turitea catchment and Hardings Park during summer is simply unacceptable. Fire is the greatest threat to the reserve and our water supply. Regrowth would take 150 years or more but in the meantime the subsequent erosion would destroy the dams. How could we ever afford to replace them ?

The public is unaware of the planned extent of the Turitea wind farm. While there are 60 , 40 story turbines in the reserve itself , there is a similar number on private farmland in front of the reserve and dominating 2,000 residences on the Summerhill side of the river. In the UK the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors estimates that the price of a house located close to a new turbine falls by 20 %, *if the owners are able to sell at all*. Imagine the effect of 120 turbines here. At a conservative average value per property of \$300,000 this translates into a \$120 million depreciation for those affected residences. The effect though would be contagious for the city as a whole. All this just as we face a property slump. These were just some of the points I made to Councillors. Let's hope common sense prevails but to be sure I strongly advise ratepayers to lobby Councillors on this crucial matter. This is not just " someone else's problem. "

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