

Summary of Communication and Public Records Requests with MassDEP Following the Release of the Findings of the MassDEP hired Wind Science Panel

By Preston Ribnick and Lilli-Ann Green

MassDEP claims they posted online all documents emailed and mailed at the beginning of the panel's meetings and prior to the end of the public comment period, July 21, 2011, including over 200 documents submitted on a CD-ROM by Wind Wise – Massachusetts (WWMA). MassDEP claims this was achieved through a link to the WWMA website.¹

WWMA never posted all of the documents online, only a catalogue listing of the titles of the over 200 documents. Therefore MassDEP has not been factual in stating that it posted the submissions.

MassDEP claims that the panel reviewed the over 200 documents submitted by WWMA prior to writing their findings. A recent communication with MassDEP states that a phone call was recently made to a staff member of the third party agency who worked with the panel. The staff member said the panel received the documents.²

WWMA shows there is no evidence that the panel reviewed the documents. Evidence from a MassDEP email points to the fact that the over 200 documents were never sent to the third party and therefore the panel never reviewed the evidence submitted by volunteers of WWMA who spent months of their life working on this project.³ The documents contained peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, white papers, reports, and 83 personal stories and documents from MA citizens and people around the world who are experiencing adverse health impacts and live in the proximity to wind turbines.⁴ Since the panel did not receive all information provided, the panel findings are not valid.

MassDEP has communicated that they will charge the public \$18,824.01 (and possibly more) for documents related to the panel, how the panel was chosen, meetings of the panel, drafts of the panel findings, and communications with MassDEP and MDPH. These documents will be heavily redacted.⁵

WWMA has asked for documents because the MassDEP did not follow the protocols of the National Academy of Sciences. The panel members were chosen in secret. All meetings were held in secret with no public participation. No meeting minutes or account of any proceedings have been released. No drafts of panel finds have been released.^{6,7}

MassDEP is still reviewing the over 500 documents that were submitted as comments after the panel released their findings. The comment period ended on March 19, 2012. Over one year ago.⁸

WWMA has reviewed the documents received through a public records request to MassDEP. The vast majority of the over 500 comments are highly critical of the panel's findings.

MassDEP has received a letter from WWMA regarding new research including three new peer-reviewed articles that have been published since the panel issued its findings. WWMA asked for a response from MassDEP.⁹

WWMA has received no response to date from MassDEP even though the letter clearly asks MassDEP to clarify where they are in the review process.

MassDEP stated that a final report would be issued once they reviewed the comments submitted by the cut off date of March 19, 2012.¹⁰

WWMA and the numerous citizens in MA who are being adversely impacted by wind turbines are waiting for the MassDEP to issue their final report that must reflect their mission of protecting the health, safety and well-being of MA citizens. It is one year later and there is still no final report. WWMA has conducted its research over the last year and found that there are now 21 locations around MA where people living in the proximity to wind turbines are reporting adverse health impacts.¹¹

References

¹ March 11, 2013 Letter to WWMA EC member from MassDEP

² Ibid

³ 3-21-13 Letter to MassDEP from WWMA EC member

⁴ Cover letter with package mailed to MassDEP from WWMA

⁵ Letter to WWMA EC member from MassDEP

⁶ Letter to MassDEP from WWMA

⁷ Letter to MassDEP from WWMA

⁸ Letter to WWMA EC member from MassDEP

⁹ Letter to MassDEP from WWMA EC

¹⁰ MassDEP website

¹¹ WWMA website map graphic