

German doctors push to halt building of wind turbines

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German doctors want more research into the health effects of wind turbines. *Source: AP*

The “parliament” of Germany’s medical profession has called on its leaders to support a halt to further wind farm developments near housing until more research has been undertaken into the possible health impacts of low-frequency noise from wind turbines.

The issue was debated at the German Medical Assembly in Frankfurt on Friday and transferred to the executive board of the German Medical Association.

Association policy adviser Adrian Alexander Jakel confirmed a motion calling for research had been forwarded to the board “for further action”.

Germany is considered a world leader in adopting renewable energy and the minutes of the Medical Assembly meeting said that, with the phase-out of nuclear power, more wind energy would be used in future. But it said the entire life cycle of renewable technologies, from the initial raw material supply to disposal and the planning and risk considerations, should be considered in advance.

The Medical Assembly motion said this required “scientifically sound findings of potential health effects, and a deliberate balance between benefit and validity to be able to make conscious weightings between the benefits and of the disadvantages and risks”.

“In particular regarding emissions in the low frequency and infrasound range there are no reliable independent studies that investigate field measurement methodology suitable for this sound field below the threshold of hearing,” they said.

The assembly called for the federal government to close the gaps in knowledge about the health effects of infrasound and low-frequency sound from wind turbines through scientific research.

It said research should clarify open questions concerning measurement methods and, where appropriate, adjust regulations to “allow the expansion and the operation of wind turbines wisely, carefully, with integrated expertise, sustainability and overall societal responsibility”.

It said the health effects of infrasound (below 20 Hz) and low-frequency sound (below 100 Hz) in relation to emissions from wind turbines were “still open questions”, as were “the effects of noise below the hearing threshold or lower frequencies with increasing exposure duration”. The assembly said the erection of more turbines close to settlements should be stopped until there was reliable data to exclude a safety hazard.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/health-science/german-doctors-push-to-halt-building-of-wind-turbines/story-e6frg8y6-1227361974184>