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## Man says Groton Wind turbine project turned his dream house into nightmare

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Mario Rampino points at the Groton Wind LLC operations and maintenance building that was erected across the street from his home. (DAN SEUFERT/Union Leader Correspondent)

GROTON — When former Boston Police Patrolman Mario Rampino moved in 1996 to a small cabin at the top of Groton Hollow Road along Clark Brook, he thought he had found his dream home.

Rampino, 71, a former U.S. Army infantryman who served in Vietnam for three years, suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. He left Boston because he needed peace and quiet and the shelter of the woods.

He had just what he needed for more than a decade, a peaceful home where he could be by himself. And then, in 2010-2011, the Groton wind farm was built. With it came an operations building that was built across from his home, without a question to him as to his wishes.

Now, Clark Brook has been ruined for fishing by the construction of the building, he says, and cars and trucks pass his house daily on what has become a busy road, he said. He's lost his privacy, and he has gained unwanted noise.

He has to move, but he doesn't have the money, and no one will buy his home, he said.

"It's the death of a dream," Rampino said. "It's torture for me to be here now. I'm afraid to walk outside. They don't ask the abutters when they do these things."

Groton Wind LLC, a 24-turbine, 48-megawatt wind-energy company, was built with the state's approval. The project, built by parent company Iberdrola Renewables of Spain, arranged to build an operations building for the plant that was supposed to be on the east side of the road and to the east of Clark Brook, one of Rampino's favorite trout fishing spots.

In 2011, Groton Wind moved its building plans, deciding instead to build on the west side of Groton Hollow Road and the west side of Clark Brook.

Rampino and his lawyer, Justin Richardson of Upton and Hatfield in Portsmouth, claim that change was not filed properly with the state's Site Evaluation Committee.

"I don't believe the SEC would have allowed the change of location for the building had they known it would affect an abutter so adversely," Richardson said.

The SEC will be holding hearings on Rampino's legal brief and the claims of others, including the state fire marshal, that the company did not file the planned changes to its facility with the proper authority.

Groton Wind did not submit new building, site and fire protection plans for to the state fire marshal prior to or during construction, according to state officials. The SEC said the hearings will determine if Groton Wind's operation certificate

should be removed.

Rampino is hoping for relief of some sort that will allow him to move.

"I'm not asking for a lot of money, but I do have to start over and I want to be treated fairly," he said.

Neighbor Cheryl Lewis said, "When these big companies come in, they don't think of the little guy."

Iberdrola's Paul Copleman said the company hopes to avoid cases like Rampino's.

"We work hard to earn the trust and respect of landowners and stakeholders at all of our plants. We were surprised that Mr. Rampino continues to have concerns, as we believed we had reached an amicable understanding with him directly, but we'll continue to work with him and all stakeholders to resolve any outstanding questions," Copleman said.

Rampino knows that town residents will receive ongoing payments from Groton Wind that are roughly equivalent to the town's yearly budget.

"But the rest of the town doesn't have to deal with this building being where it is now," he said. "I say to people who want wind power, let them try and live here now. I couldn't sell this place now if I wanted to."

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