



SOUND LEVEL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

12.14.2021

Benjamins Mill Wind Project

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1 Introduction

Natural Forces has undertaken a sound level impact assessment study for the proposed 28 turbine Benjamins Mill Wind Project (the Project) site to assess the impact of the sound emissions on the dwellings, seasonal homes, and local businesses surrounding the Project during both construction and operation. A map of the Project area with the proposed wind turbine generator (WTG) layout is included in Appendix A.

While several turbine models are being considered, this assessment has been completed using the Enercon E-160 EP5 E2 turbine. This model has a nameplate capacity of 5.5 MW and a hub height of 120 m.

The operational sound assessment was conducted using the ISO 9613-2: Acoustics - Attenuation of sound during propagation outdoors - Part 2: General method of calculation model within the Decibel module of the software package, windPRO version 3.5. The Guide to Preparing an EA Registration Document for Wind Power Projects was consulted during this assessment.

The construction sound assessment was conducted using standard methodology. Construction noise is not always constant and can produce impulsive and variable sounds at different noise levels, which could create heightened annoyance levels in the surrounding community. The construction noise assessment has considered the maximum noise levels produced by various construction equipment to determine maximum sustained noise levels when all equipment is running.

1.1 Operational Sound Guidelines

The Guide to Preparing an EA Registration Document for Wind Power Projects in Nova Scotia requires that wind farm design and siting does not cause sound levels to exceed 40 dBA at the exterior of receptors. The more detailed recommendations included in the New Brunswick guidance document Additional Information Requirements for Wind Turbines created to outline additional requirements to the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulation are outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1: RECOMMENDED SOUND CRITERIA FOR WIND TURBINES (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS FOR WIND TURBINES).

Wind Speed (m/s)	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Wind Turbine Sound Criteria [dB(A)]	40	40	40	43	45	49	51	53

Using both the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick guidance documents, a threshold of 40 dB(A) for sound levels at the exterior of a receptor for all wind speeds was selected.

1.2 Receptors

There are 64 receptors located within 2 km of the turbine locations that consist of year-long dwellings and seasonal dwellings. They have been identified based on online geographical data from the Data Catalogue available from the Government of Nova Scotia and cross referenced with aerial photography, as well as site visits. The geographical coordinates of these receptors are included in Appendix B. A map of the Project area with the receptors is included in Appendix A.

1.3 Turbine Model

The turbine model used for the assessment is the Enercon E-160 5.5 MW machine. The E-160 model has a hub height of 120 m and a rotor diameter of 160 m. The geographical coordinates of the 28 proposed turbines are included in Appendix B.

Should an alternate turbine model be selected, a new sound assessment will be conducted.

1.4 Siting

All turbines have been set back over a kilometer from the nearest dwellings. There are no schools, care homes, or other sensitive receptors within 2 km of the turbines and no other wind turbines within 3 km of the Project.

The area is currently used for forestry. The current vegetation cover of trees and thick shrubs will aid in the absorption of sound from both construction and operation of the Project. The Project is not near the ocean.

2 Construction Sound Assessment

General construction activities include those associated with vegetation clearing, road building, foundations, and turbine erection. These activities will likely involve the use of backhoes, concrete mixers and pumps, cranes, dump trucks, excavators and light-duty pick-up trucks with the associated sound levels predicted in Table 2.

TABLE 2: SOUND POWER LEVELS ASSOCIATED WITH CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT (WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, 2017)

Equipment	Max Sound Power Level (dB(A))
Backhoe	78
Concrete Mixer	79
Concrete Pump	81

Crane	81
Dump Truck	76
Excavator	81
Pick-up Truck	75

It is not expected that all equipment would be running at the same time, but to determine maximum expected sound levels during construction, the WSDOT (2017) guidelines for decibel addition were used to determine that 86 dB[A] is the highest expected sound level during combined construction activities (Washington State Department of Transportation, 2017).

The environment in which the Project construction will occur is considered a soft environment with normal unpacked earth. The normal unpacked earth and topography will facilitate attenuation of noise emissions at shorter distances. Table 3 identifies the sound levels predicted to be observed at various distances from the construction site determined using WSDOT (2017) guidelines.

TABLE 3: WORST-CASE SOUND LEVELS IN THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT CALCULATED USING WSDOT (WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, 2017) GUIDELINES AND ASSUMING SOUND LEVELS IN SOFT ENVIRONMENT ATTENUATES AT -7.5 dB[A] PER DOUBLING OF DISTANCE.

Distance	Construction Sound Level (dB[A])
50 ft (15.2 m)	86
100 ft (30.5 m)	78.5
200 ft (61 m)	71
400 ft (122 m)	63.5
800 ft (244 m)	56
1600 ft (488 m)	48.5
3200 ft (975 m)	41

Many sound level scales refer to 70 dB[A] as an arbitrary base of comparison where levels above 70 dB[A] can be considered annoying to some people (Purdue University). As indicated in Table 3, at 61 m from the construction site, noise levels are approximately 70 dB[A], similar to that of a car travelling at 100 km/h and just at the threshold of possible annoyance (Purdue University, 2000). Also indicated in Table 3, sound levels from the construction site reach ~40 dB[A] at 1 km from the site. With the nearest dwelling located ~1.5 km from a proposed turbine, construction noise is not expected to impact dwellings in the area. Further, the construction noise is not expected to be annoyingly high beyond 61 m from the construction site as sound levels at this distance have already attenuated to approximately 70 dB[A].

Additionally, this site has been chosen due to its excellent wind resource. Wind generally increases ambient sound levels in an area and in combination with the vegetative cover will aid in making construction noise less noticeable at even shorter distances (Washington State Department of Transportation, 2017).

3 Operational Sound Assessment Methodology

The operational sound pressure level was calculated at each point of reception using the Decibel module of WindPRO v.3.5, which uses the ISO 9613-2 model “Attenuation of sound during propagation outdoors, Part 2: A general method of calculation”.

3.1 Worst Case Sound Assessment

The worst-case sound assessment followed a conservative methodology in calculating sound levels by assuming downwind propagation is occurring simultaneously in all directions of the wind turbines. Sound propagation in an upwind direction would result in a significant reduction of sound levels at any receptor located upwind from the turbine. This means that the resulting sound levels from the assessment are likely calculated as higher than they would be experienced.

As another conservative measure, no attenuation was considered from topographical shielding for objects (such as barns, trees, buildings, etc.) located between the turbines and receptors. A global ground attenuation of 0 was input, which represents a ground area that is covered in glass, to produce the worst-case scenario for sound impacts.

No correction for special audible characteristics, such as clearly audible tones, impulses, or modulation of sound levels, was made as part of this assessment. These are not common characteristics of modern WTGs in a well-designed wind farm. It is common that WTG manufacturers guarantee the absence of tonal sound produced by the WTG. Furthermore, impulses and modulation of sound levels from the wind farm under normal conditions would not be of a level to necessitate the application of any penalty.

4 Results of Operational Sound Assessment

The results of the worst-case sound prediction model for the receptors that are predicted to receive the highest sound levels are summarized in Table 4. The full results from windPRO are included in Appendix B. All receptors adhere to the Guide to Preparing an EA Registration Document for Wind Power Projects in Nova Scotia in that the sound levels do not exceed 40 dBA at the receptors..

Table 4 shows the maximum modeled sound levels that are predicted to be experienced at each of the 20 receptors predicted to receive the highest sound levels for any wind speed from 4.0 m/s to 12.0 m/s. The highest perceived sound is anticipated to be 32.3 dB(A) according to the current modelling.

TABLE 4: OPERATIONAL SOUND LEVEL SUMMARY OF THE 20 RECEPTORS PREDICTED TO RECEIVE THE HIGHEST SOUND LEVELS FOR ANY WIND SPEED MODELLED BETWEEN AND INCLUDING 4 TO 12 M/s.

Receptor ID	Worst Case Max Sound Level from WTG [dB(A)]	Compliance with Nova Scotia's Requirements (under worst case assessment)
BL	32.3	Yes
AG	31	Yes
AC	30.6	Yes
U	30.5	Yes
V	30.5	Yes
W	30.5	Yes
BB	30.4	Yes
AI	30.3	Yes
AP	30.3	Yes
BG	30.3	Yes
AE	30.2	Yes
AH	30.2	Yes
AK	30.2	Yes
AN	30.2	Yes
AO	30.2	Yes
T	30.1	Yes
X	30.1	Yes
AD	30.1	Yes
AF	30.1	Yes
AQ	30.1	Yes

4.1 Low Frequency Sound

Infrasound describes sounds with a frequency less than 20 Hz and can occur when large masses are in motion. The movement of wind turbine blades has generated infrasound in the local environment in some cases. An additional assessment was completed through the Finland Low Frequency module of windPRO v3.5. This assessment showed a minimum frequency of 80 Hz observed at all receptors, 60 Hz higher than the threshold for infrasound.

The details of this assessment have been included in Appendix C.

5 Conclusion and Mitigation

While heightened sound levels during construction activities are unavoidable, the sound level assessment for the construction period shows that sounds levels at nearby residences are not expected to be significant. Various mitigation measures will be put in place during construction to limit the heightened sound levels.

The operational sound level modelling for the Project demonstrates that the sound levels expected to be experienced at receptors under worst case conditions adhere to the Nova Scotia guidance. Should excessive sound emissions from the Project be reported during operation at nearby receptors, screening mitigations will be explored for feasibility in the area. Such mitigation measures for heightened sound levels could include increasing vegetation between the receptor and emitting source, and any other appropriate technology available at the time of the required mitigation.

6 References

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Purdue University. (2000). Noise Sources and Their Effects. Retrieved from Purdue: <https://www.chem.purdue.edu/chemsafety/Training/PPETrain/dblevels.htm>

Purdue University. (n.d.). Hearing Conservation Program. Retrieved from <https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/rem/documents/programs/HCP.pdf>

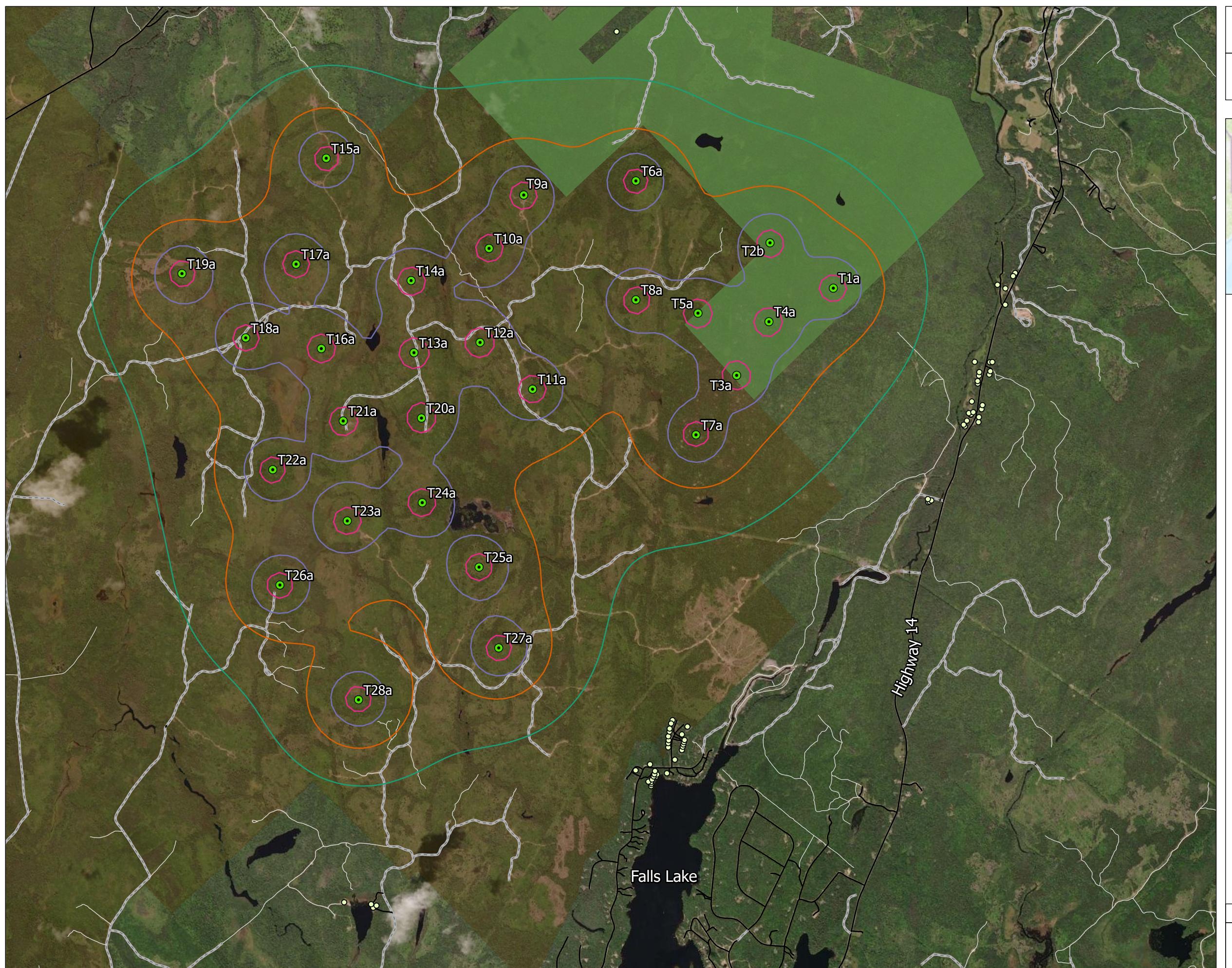
van Kamp, I., & van den Berg, F. (2018). Health Effects Related to Wind Turbine Sound, Including Low-Frequency Sound and Infrasound. *Acoustics Australia*, 31-57.

Washington State Department of Transportation. (2017). Chapter 7 - Noise Impact Assessment. Retrieved from Biological Assessment Preparation for Transportation Projects -

Advanced Training Manual:

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/448B609A-A84E-4670-811B-9BC68AAD3000/0/BA_ManualChapter7.pdf

Appendix A: Project Map with Modelled Operational Sound Assessment Contours



Benjamins Mill Wind Project

Sound Assessment



Legend

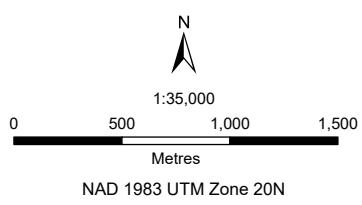
- Preliminary Turbine Layout
 - Receptors
 - Trails
 - Existing Resource Roads
 - Existing Roads
 - Crown Land
 - Private Lands
- Sound Assessment Contours**
- 35 dB(A)
 - 40 dB(A)
 - 45 dB(A)
 - 50 dB(A)

Notes

1. The threshold for sound perceived at a receptor from a wind turbine is 40 dB(A) as per the Guide to Preparing an EA Registration Document for Wind Power Projects in Nova Scotia

Sources

- Basedata provided by the Province of Nova Scotia
- Basemap: Maxar World Imagery



Production Date: Dec 15, 2021 | Prepared By:

**Appendix B: WindPRO v.3.5 Decibel Module Calculation
Results: Worst Case**

DECIBEL - Main Result

Calculation: Worst Case Sound Assessment E-160

	WTG					
NSA	23	24	25	26	27	28
A	3686	3880	3391	3194	2744	1982
B	3694	3299	2481	3910	1815	2839
C	3854	3427	2611	4106	1984	3061
D	3668	3856	3363	3183	2712	1965
E	3652	3849	3366	3157	2723	1948
F	3627	3872	3435	3078	2830	1931
G	3834	3464	2648	4014	1956	2901
H	3823	3450	2633	4006	1944	2896
I	3809	3435	2618	3996	1930	2889
J	3787	3415	2598	3971	1908	2864
K	3801	3422	2605	3993	1922	2893
L	3812	3425	2608	4014	1933	2923
M	3794	3410	2593	3994	1915	2900
N	3806	3415	2598	4013	1927	2926
O	3786	3398	2580	3990	1906	2901
P	3872	3469	2652	4092	1995	3015
Q	3771	3378	2561	3981	1892	2899
R	3625	3255	2439	3814	1747	2719
S	6774	6046	5815	7595	6069	7447
T	3627	3153	2346	3949	1790	2992
U	6136	5403	5054	6907	5203	6612
V	6139	5406	5060	6912	5213	6621
W	6163	5430	5090	6939	5249	6656
X	6261	5528	5186	7036	5340	6748
Y	5527	4812	4316	6215	4313	5734
Z	5539	4823	4328	6228	4326	5747
AA	5557	4841	4347	6246	4346	5767
AB	5525	4808	4317	6215	4319	5740
AC	6174	5441	5106	6952	5269	6675
AD	6278	5544	5206	7054	5364	6771
AE	6294	5560	5234	7076	5403	6808
AF	6317	5584	5256	7099	5424	6829
AG	6155	5421	5101	6939	5281	6682
AH	5941	5211	4810	6686	4908	6325
AI	5932	5201	4803	6678	4904	6321
AJ	6075	5344	4945	6821	5042	6459
AK	5968	5237	4843	6717	4948	6365
AL	6087	5356	4963	6836	5066	6483
AM	6586	5855	5591	7394	5818	7206
AN	6014	5282	4895	6765	5006	6421
AO	6017	5285	4899	6769	5010	6426
AP	5998	5267	4882	6752	4997	6412
AQ	6041	5310	4925	6795	5038	6453
AR	6123	5392	5008	6878	5121	6536
AS	3856	3410	2597	4132	1994	3112
AT	3735	3299	2484	4002	1869	2980
AU	3845	3394	2582	4127	1986	3115
AV	3839	3385	2573	4126	1982	3118
AW	3712	3271	2457	3987	1849	2974
AX	3831	3374	2562	4122	1976	3121
AY	3699	3255	2441	3980	1839	2974
AZ	3824	3364	2554	4120	1972	3124
BA	6140	5407	5029	6896	5147	6561
BB	6046	5314	4943	6807	5072	6485
BC	6637	5907	5663	7453	5907	7289
BD	3676	3227	2414	3963	1818	2966
BE	3774	3310	2500	4078	1926	3093
BF	3661	3205	2393	3958	1809	2973
BG	6578	5849	5613	7396	5866	7245
BH	3646	3186	2375	3949	1797	2971
BI	3780	3301	2495	4102	1944	3138
BJ	3632	3164	2355	3946	1790	2981
BK	6745	6017	5783	7565	6035	7414
BL	5311	4845	5258	6160	5967	6811

**Appendix C: WindPRO v.3.5 Decibel Module Calculation
Results: Finland Low Frequency Assessment**

DECIBEL - Main Result

Calculation: Worst Case Sound Assessment E-160 - Low Frequency

...continued from previous page

WTG

	23	24	25	26	27	28
NSA	3627	3872	3435	3078	2830	1931
F	3834	3464	2648	4014	1956	2901
G	3823	3450	2633	4006	1944	2896
H	3809	3435	2618	3996	1930	2889
I	3787	3415	2598	3971	1908	2864
J	3801	3422	2605	3993	1922	2893
K	3812	3425	2608	4014	1933	2923
M	3794	3410	2593	3994	1915	2900
N	3806	3415	2598	4013	1927	2926
O	3786	3398	2580	3990	1906	2901
P	3872	3469	2652	4092	1995	3015
Q	3771	3378	2561	3981	1892	2899
R	3625	3255	2439	3814	1747	2719
S	6774	6046	5815	7595	6069	7447
T	3627	3153	2346	3949	1790	2992
U	6136	5403	5054	6907	5203	6612
V	6139	5406	5060	6912	5213	6621
W	6163	5430	5090	6939	5249	6656
X	6261	5528	5186	7036	5340	6748
Y	5527	4812	4316	6215	4313	5734
Z	5539	4823	4328	6228	4326	5747
AA	5557	4841	4347	6246	4346	5767
AB	5525	4808	4317	6215	4319	5740
AC	6174	5441	5106	6952	5269	6675
AD	6278	5544	5206	7054	5364	6771
AE	6294	5560	5234	7076	5403	6808
AF	6317	5584	5256	7099	5424	6829
AG	6155	5421	5101	6939	5281	6682
AH	5941	5211	4810	6686	4908	6325
AI	5932	5201	4803	6678	4904	6321
AJ	6075	5344	4945	6821	5042	6459
AK	5968	5237	4843	6717	4948	6365
AL	6087	5356	4963	6836	5066	6483
AM	6586	5855	5591	7394	5818	7206
AN	6014	5282	4895	6765	5006	6421
AO	6017	5285	4899	6769	5010	6426
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BB	6046	5314	4943	6807	5072	6485
BC	6637	5907	5663	7453	5907	7289
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BI	3780	3301	2495	4102	1944	3138
BJ	3632	3164	2355	3946	1790	2981
BK	6745	6017	5783	7565	6035	7414
BL	5311	4845	5258	6160	5967	6811