

Letter to The Beacon Editor

As a new Quail Ridge resident in Acton, I've been closely following the actions of Acton town boards and residents to learn about Concord's proposed expansion to their Water Treatment Plant (WTP) on Nagog Pond. In Concord's latest proposal presented at the September 12th Selectmen's hearing, the originally proposed solar panels have been replaced by three 100kW generators. I was puzzled as to why Concord would use generators as a primary power source when generators are normally used as backup during power failures. So, I went to Concord's website and reviewed their documents. I was startled by what I found. Not only are the generators noisy, but they produce more CO2 greenhouse gas and heat pollution than an electric company producing an equivalent amount of power. While I found no cost analysis on Concord's website, I can only conclude that using the proposed generators would reduce Concord's cost to operate the plant, but with no concern to the environment or the residents and wildlife living around the WTP.

At the September 12th Selectmen hearing on this matter, Concord stated that the noise from the new WTP will be within the Massachusetts mandated limit of no more than a 10 decibels increase. The supporting documentation calculated that the noise at the nearest residential property line would increase by 9.2 decibels, just below the allowable limit. According to a loudness comparison chart published on the internet, this would be like "nighttime noise in a city." The noise analysis report included noise mitigation steps that Concord can take to further reduce the noise, but this was not mentioned at the hearing. Finally, as stated at the hearing, the baseline "ambient noise" measurement used in Concord's analysis was flawed requiring an update to the analysis.

At the same hearing, Concord's environmental consultant stated that CO2 greenhouse gas emissions would be 1 ton per year. However, Concord's own supporting documentation states the emission of CO2 would be between 308.6 to 317.1 tons per year, 80% more than if the electric company was used for power. Additionally, 2,128 to 2,286 million BTUs of waste heat would be vented into the local environment each year.

I encourage readers to show their support against using generators for Concord's Nagog Pond WTP expansion by attending the next hearing on November 1st. Large, noisy, greenhouse gas emitting generators in Acton's residential areas are not acceptable.

Robert Kingan, 30 Parkland Lane, Acton MA, (978) 501 4408