



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Mission Support Services
800 Independence Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20591

MAR 26 2014

The Honorable Ben Hueso
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2054
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Hueso:

Thank you for your February 10 letter concerning the use of audio visual warning systems (AVWS).

The role of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is to recommend marking and/or lighting as needed, in accordance with the FAA's Advisory Circular (AC) 70/7460-1, Obstruction Marking and Lighting, to ensure the safety of air traffic. In November 2005, the FAA completed a separate lighting study for wind turbines. The study concluded that sequential red flashing lights on wind turbines and wind farms provided the best awareness for pilots during varied weather and nighttime conditions.

Our policy is to recommend nighttime lighting on the perimeter of the wind farm and on any wind turbines that are more than ½ mile apart. It should be noted that the study concluded that white lights were not very visible to pilots on these structures. Beyond pilot awareness issues, we have found that red lights at night are visually less intrusive for people on the ground.

In your letter, you state that wind turbine lights are required to stay on at all times. The FAA requires red sequentially flashing lights at night only. We determined that white or off-white wind turbines provide adequate visibility to pilots during the day. However, if the wind turbine were grey or a darker color, we would require daytime lights.

We completed a study of radar activated lighting on a wind farm in Talbot, Ontario. We are currently completing technical standards for application of these types of systems for use throughout the national airspace system. After the technical standards are completed, we will initiate a change to AC 70/7460-1, Obstruction Marking and Lighting, to include radar activated lighting.

The FAA cannot require wind turbine owners to change lighting systems to radar activated lighting systems. We require that the lighting system used meet FAA specifications and cannot mandate a radar activated component over standard lights.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact Roderick D. Hall, Assistant Administrator for Government and Industry Affairs at (202) 267-3277.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'ELR', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Elizabeth L. Ray
Vice President, Mission Support Services
Air Traffic Organization