

Statkraft Ireland Limited
Building 4200
Cork Airport Business Park
Co. Cork
T12 D23C

Date: 16 August 2023

Re: Proposed development of up to 15 no. wind turbines with a tip height of up to 175m and laying of approximately 26km of underground electricity cabling to facilitate the connection to the national grid, and all associated site development works
Townlands of Camagh, Carlanstown, Coole, Clonrobert, Clonsura, Doon, Monktown, Mullagh, Newcastle and other townlands, Co. Westmeath.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I have been asked by the Director of Planning of An Bord Pleanála to refer to your letter dated 20th July 2023.

As set out in your letter both cases have been the subject of further information requests from the Board.

The Board is currently working through a backlog of cases including all strategic development applications. As you will be aware, up until recently the Board was awaiting the appointment of additional Board members. Additional Board members have now been appointed to the Board. Over the coming weeks and months, the Board will now be in a position to increase its decision making on all case types. The Board is aware of the urgency and importance of all strategic development applications and will endeavour to make decisions on all outstanding applications as soon as practicable.

Please note that case number ABP-309770-21 is with the Planning Inspector awaiting completion of a report and recommendation and ABP-310312-21 and ABP-312659-22 are at Board level awaiting a decision.

Unfortunately, the Board is not in a position to specify a timeframe for the making of a decision on these applications at this time.

The Board notes the concerns raised in your letter and will manage the backlog of cases including renewable energy projects in the most effective way possible.

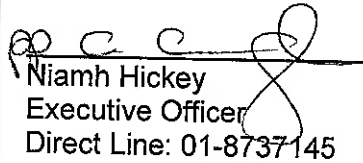
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The Board recently published a statement on its website in relation to the backlog of cases and can be viewed on the following link <https://www.pleanala.ie/en-IE/BacklogInformation>

The delay in determining the above applications is regretted.

Yours faithfully,


Niamh Hickey
Executive Officer
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20th July 2023

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**RE: Request for decisions to be expedited for Coole Wind Farm ABP-309770-21 & Dernacart
Wind Farm ABP Ref 310312-21**

Dear Ms. Ciara Kellett,

Statkraft previously wrote to An Bord Pleanála in January of this year setting out our experiences and the urgency with making decisions in 2023 on two of our onshore wind energy projects in advance of the 2023 RESS3 and ECP2.4 processes. We write again having not received a response to our letter and wish to reiterate the urgency for robust decisions on these projects to be issued as expeditiously as possible.

On the 22nd of March 2021, Coole Wind Farm Ltd (parent company Statkraft Ireland Ltd) lodged a Strategic Infrastructure Application to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) for the proposed Coole Wind Farm (100MW) in Co. Westmeath. The project comprises of 15 no. wind turbines with a tip height of up to 175m and the laying of a 26km grid connection to facilitate the connection of the wind farm to the national grid (ABP Ref 309770-21).

The application was due a decision on the 17th of September 2021. We received a letter from ABP rescheduling the decision to the 1st of November 2021. After this we received another letter stating that the 1st of November 2021 decision date was not achieved, and the application would be determined as soon as practicable.

On the 21st of April 2022 (13 months post lodgement) we received a Further Information (FI) Request which was responded to on the 1st November 2022. On the 21st of December 2022 (nearly two months post lodgement of the FI response) we received a letter advising that the FI response contained significant additional data which required advertising. The advertisement was made with the public consultation period running until the 24th February 2023. On the 24th March 2023 we received a request to address observations received on the FI response. A response addressing observations was lodged on the 5th May 2023. We await a decision.

At the time of writing, the application was lodged to ABP **118 weeks ago** which is over 6.5 times the statutory objective decision period of 18 weeks. These decision timelines are very significant and extremely concerning.

In addition, on the 24th May 2021, Statkraft Ireland Ltd lodged an appeal for the Dernacart Wind Farm (50MW) located in Co. Laois and a decision is also awaited.

A planning application for the Dernacart Wind Farm was initially lodged to Laois County Council on the 17th of February 2020 (Laois CoCo Planning Ref: 2078). An FI request was received on the 2nd of June 2020, with the response to this FI submitted to Laois County Council on the 10th of March 2021. A decision to refuse was subsequently received by Laois County Council on the 30th of April 2021.

As detailed above, a planning appeal for the Dernacart Wind Farm was lodged to ABP on the 24th of May 2021 (ABP Ref 310312-21). On the 16th of January 2022 (86 weeks after lodging the appeal) we received a FI Request from ABP which was responded to on the 2nd of February 2023. This appeal was lodged to ABP **100 weeks ago** which is over 5.5 times the statutory objective decision period of 18 weeks.

As you are aware the two key mechanisms which ensure that permitted renewable energy projects can be developed and constructed in Ireland are the Enduring Connection Policy (ECP) which allows a grid connection to be secured for a particular project once planning permission is in place, and the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) which allows a support mechanism or a Route to Market to be secured for a project.

The Department of the Environment, Climate & Communications (DECC) third RESS auction (RESS3) is running in Sept 2023. Without a decision on the Coole Wind Farm in the next month, the project will not be able to participate in the RESS3 process. The project already missed out on the opportunity to participate in the second RESS auction (RESS2) in May 2022 after the application had been **58 weeks** (over 3 times the statutory objective decision period) in the ABP planning system.

The next ECP process (ECP 2.4) will be run between October to November this year. Without a decision on the Dernacart Wind Farm pre-October 2023, the project will not be able to participate in the next grid allocation round and once again will miss the opportunity to secure a grid offer for the project. The project already missed out on the opportunity to participate in the ECP 2.3 process in September 2022 after the application had already been **70 weeks** (nearly 4 times the statutory objective decision period) in the planning system.

The State has acknowledged a crisis in relation to climate and the security of energy supply. The State has highlighted an urgent need for more renewable energy projects, like the above projects, to address these crises. The European Union has prepared the REPowerEU plan with the express aim to speed up the permitting processes for renewable energy projects. This is reinforced in the Climate Action Plan (CAP), where powering renewables is one of the six vital high impact sectors relied upon to deliver the necessary change. In fact, the CAP23 highlights that we are already falling

behind the annual reductions we were due to have achieved in the first two years of this decade and consequently we must speed up the delivery of projects particularly onshore wind projects before 2025 to have any chance of reaching Ireland's targets. The above two projects can contribute up to 150MW to Ireland's targets.

Statkraft Ireland hopes to play a significant role in Ireland meeting its ambitious 2030 targets with respect to Climate Action through the development of the above projects. I hope I have set out clearly the necessity for robust decisions on these project to be issued as expeditiously as possible and in the coming week. I'd appreciate if you can respond to this letter providing a date for when decisions can be issued.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me .

Yours sincerely,



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