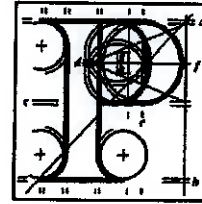


Our Case Number: ABP-309770-21

Planning Authority Reference Number:



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Caroline and Patrick Pilkington and Others
Simonstown House
Coole
Co. Westmeath

Date: 19 May 2021

Re: Proposed development of up to 15 wind turbines with a tip height of up to 175 metres 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

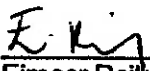
Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your observation or submission in relation to the case mentioned above and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions / observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the Local Authority and at the offices of An Bord Pleanála when they have been processed by the Board.

For further information on this case please access our website at www.pleanala.ie and input the 6-digit case number into the search box. This number is shown on the top of this letter (for example: 303000).

Yours faithfully,


Eimear Reilly
Administrative Assistant
Direct Line: 01-8737184

BL50A

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SIMONSTOWN HOUSE, COOLE, CO WESTMEATH

Tel: 044 9661849/086 4517508

Email: [REDACTED]

Planning Dept
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough St
Dublin 1



Dear Sir

We, Caroline and Patrick Pilkington, Simonstown House, Coole,
Brenda and Gabriel Glynn, Simonstown, Coole,
Brian and Winna MacGowan, Ballinaloe, Coole
Martin and Ann Craig, Simonstown, Coole
Sharon and Ian O'Keeffe, Simonstown, Coole
Sean and Fiona Butler, Simonstown, Coole
Joan Gunning, Lower Coole
Anna Baggallay, Kiltoom, Castlepollard

wish to make a written submission/observation in relation to **Case reference:**
PA25M.309770: Townlands of Camagh, Carlanstown, Coole, Clonrobert,
Clonsura, Doon, Monkstown, Mullagh, Newcastle and other townlands, Co.
Westmeath.

Proposed development of up to 15 wind turbines with a tip height of up to 175 metres and laying of approximately 26km of underground electricity cabling to facilitate the connection to the national grid, and all associated site development works.

We urge that this Strategic Infrastructure Development Application be refused for the following reasons:

1. Application for SID

Coole Wind Farm, Statkraft, applied for SID by introducing 2 extra wind turbines to the proposed wind farm. They have said that by increasing the width of the rotor blades and adding 2 more turbines the capacity output will increase from 'up to 50MW' to 'expected to have a total output in the region of 90MW' bringing it into line with the required amount for an SID. The exact model of turbine is not stated so it seems unlikely that this higher capacity of output could be reached by a tweak to the model

and increasing the number of turbines by 15%. We believe this is just a 'play' on numbers to bring the capacity up to the required amount so that the people of Westmeath are sidestepped to gain the permission the windfarm requires.

2. Environmental effects of positioning an industrial windfarm on a bog

We are not opposed to production of sustainable energy and fully support a move away from the use of fossil fuels. We also totally support micro renewable energy means like the proposed Solar Farm at Tullynally, where an area of 35 acres will produce enough electricity supply for half of the local town of Castlepollard.

However, we cannot see how the Government can hand out grants to one State Board to rewet and regenerate bogs and then support another State Board in their wish to drain peat bogs further, pour thousands of tonnes of concrete into them and ruin their environmental structure forever.

It is now widely recognised and accepted that a bog, in its natural state, can sink more carbon than any wind farm can save. The Press is full of articles and documentaries about the huge benefits that bogs can have on Climate Change. Let Ireland be the leaders in this, spend money on regenerating the bogs to capture this carbon rather than supporting environmental suicide.

3. Effects on Tourism in North Westmeath

Attached are 2 photographs that I took from the top of the Hill of Mael, one of Westmeath's highest points at 240 metres above sea level. These were taken on Easter Saturday 2021 – a beautiful sunny clear day. Photo 1 clearly shows uninterrupted views across the bog at Clonsura and Doon to Camagh and beyond to Granard.

This view was not included in the Photo Montages but it very clearly shows the beauty of Westmeath. If the wind farm were to go ahead this photo would have 15 turbines reaching 10 metres above the top of this hill (the proposed wind farm is at 75 metres above sea level). The view would be destroyed, the potential for tourism would disappear.

Photo 2 shows the view looking across to Knockeyon, another Westmeath high point at the end of Lough Derravaragh. It shows the uninterrupted beauty of North Westmeath and this is where the village of Castlepollard nestles in the lee of The Hill of Mael and was recently awarded €500,000 for regeneration with the emphasis on

'building on the unique architectural heritage of the Town Square and Green, creating space for the community and visitors alike,

establishing Castlepollard as a base, from where, visitors will explore the many sights of North Westmeath'.

Again the Government gives out money, to create a tourist centre and takes that likelihood away by supporting an industrial wind farm site in the middle of it.

4. Likely significant effects on a European Site

All the drainage from the proposed wind farm site runs into the Rivers Glore and Inny. The Glore runs into the Inny, a major tributary of the River Shannon, that runs in and out of Lough Derravaragh, part of Lough Derravaragh Natural Heritage Area and a Special Protection Area under the EU Bird Directive. Where the Inny runs out it borders Garriskill Bog, a Special Area of Conservation and a Special Protection Area.

At present the silt traps on the worked bog do not work, they have not been upgraded and the water pours over the trap, around the concrete surround and finds its way into the Rivers Inny and Glore. When the area floods, which happens frequently in the winter months, the water level of the drains and ditches rises to the same level as the rivers. This means that matter from the silt traps, be it concrete seeping from the foundations, displaced peat, silt or sand from construction work, would all flow down the Inny, into Lough Derravaragh and beyond. An environmental drainage disaster that could cause huge damage to the natural habitats and to flora and fauna, that live and grow in this fragile environment. It is because of these that we have NHAs, SPAs and SACs – they must be protected.

5. Environmental effects to birds and wildlife

The attached photograph No 3 shows a flock of approximately 120 Whooper swans taken in January 2021. These are feeding in a field very close to Lough Derravaragh where they fly to at night. Whooper swans migrate to Ireland from Iceland and a map shows their direct route to Lough Derravaragh would bring them straight over the proposed windfarm.

The application has used research prepared in 2003 by Steve M Percival to assess the potential impact and collision rates of birds. It was a desktop study of available literature, some of which dated as far back as 1989, on windfarm impact on birds from around the world, none of which had been undertaken in Ireland. To use a desktop study with data not generated in Ireland and some eighteen years old cannot be said to

represent an accurate assessment relevant to this particular windfarm application in 2021.

Not only Whooper swans but also many different breeds of duck use the River Inny as their guidepath between Lough Sheelin and Lough Derravaragh. The industrial wind farm would be on this direct path and would cause death of birds, confusion for migrating birds and a decline in birdlife in the area. The application uses no research undertaken before and after the building of a wind farm into the collision rates of birds.

Since commercial peat harvesting has stopped on the bogs there has been a noted increase in the presence of larks, lapwings, cuckoos and ducks. These would once again disappear in the presence of a windfarm.

6. Proper planning and sustainable development

In the application Coole Wind Farm have omitted many important factors that are of great concern.

Notably:

i) The road from Boherquill to Lisnagappagh which will have a steady flow of construction traffic in both directions plus the huge articulated lorries with the turbines themselves. This road is only 3 metres wide in places and goes through the old cut stone railway line. Will they take out the grass verges, pull down the cut stone and destroy this beautiful rural road?

ii) The borrow pit is 6.21 Ha in size. It is estimated that 251,915 cubic metres of hardcore will be extracted for use on the Wind Farm site. To do this 74,400 cubic metres of topsoil will have to be scraped off, stored and put back once the borrow pit is finished with. In the 2017 planning application the borrow pit was the same size, 6.21 Ha, they were to extract 200,000 cubic metres (only 13 turbines) but only 38,000 cubic metres of topsoil was to be cleared and then put back.

Why is there now double the amount of topsoil to clear?

Where is this huge amount of topsoil going to be stored during the extraction of the borrow pit?

iii) Each turbine foundation will require 600 cubic metres of concrete and lean mix. This will be coming in ready-mix lorries, approximately 70 concrete lorries per turbine, making a total of

1,050 concrete lorries entering the wind farm site but no delivery route has been planned. It is thought the L5755 will be used.

On top of this 250,000 cubic metres of hardcore will have to be carted from the borrow pit to the various parts of the wind farm site. This will need approximately 17,000 lorries.

The most direct route from the Borrow Pit to the site and for many of the concrete lorries coming to the site will be along the L5755. This is a single track lane that cannot take 2 large lorries passing each other, let alone up to 18,000 lorries heading up and down the road. Nowhere in the application is it mentioned that the L5755, from Camagh Bridge to Lickbla, is to be upgraded, widened or made into a road suitable for this amount of traffic. It is a very beautiful, small, rural lane. Is this to be made into a motorway?

- iv) On the Site Location map showing Site Notices there are only 8 site notices on the entire 26 km length of the Grid Connection. There are many junctions along the route where there are no site notices. This is a planning error and means some people living on the Grid connection route are not aware of the disruption that will be coming.
- v) Three Ireland placed a communications Mast in Coole Village about 15 years ago. This is ignored and not shown on the map of Masts in the region – is this intentional, or do they plan to decommission this mast? The sightline from Coole Mast to the Finea Mast crosses the centre of the wind farm. The Coole Mast was positioned precisely to have a clear sightline to Finea. This will impact the people of Coole and surrounding area who rely on the Mast for communications.

7. Connection to the National Grid

Coole is not a suitable area for production of electricity as it is 26 kms from the National Grid substation, Mullingar. The townland of Simonstown is right on the route of the proposed underground cables. For at least 9 months we will have to put up with disruptions on our main route from Coole the L1826 to the N4, Mullingar, Dublin and beyond. With this brings noise, dirt, bad roads, subsidence of roads, delay and hassle to the community.

The L1826 is not a proper two lane road – there are no white lines down the middle of it and if a lorry is passing a car, one of them has to pull over to the verge. There are soft verges all down this road as it runs across the

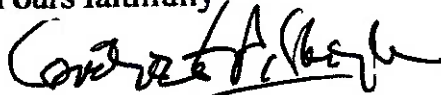
bog. In many places the grid connection trench will be dug in the middle of the road, and the cable joint pits being 2.5metres wide x 6 metres long at every 500 metres will be in the middle of the road. On top of the actual construction and trench digging it is estimated at:

' Approximately 15 truck movements per day to each works area to both remove excavated material and deliver appropriate infill material. A small number of truck movements will be required to deliver cable route components (ducting, membranes, etc) to site. '

The application states that the road will stay open during most of the grid connection construction work. However, the road is simply not wide enough to sustain a 2.5 metre hole in the middle, plus diggers, tipper lorries and construction traffic to be able to keep the road open. For over 9 months this will cause huge disruption and expense to those that travel to and from Coole every day.

For all these reasons, and many more, we insist that An Bord Pleanala reject this planning application. The place for these industrial sized wind turbines is off-shore, please end this application once and for all. The fee of €50 for this submission is attached.

Yours faithfully



Caroline Pilkington
Simonstown House, Coole, Co Westmeath



Patrick Pilkington

Brenda Glynn

Simonstown, Coole, Co Westmeath

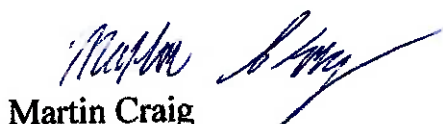


Gabriel Glynn



Brian MacGowan

Ballinaloe, Coole, Co Westmeath



Martin Craig
Simonstown, Coole, Co Westmeath

Winna MacGowan



Ann Craig

Sharon O'Keeffe

Sharon O'Keeffe
Simonstown, Coole, Co Westmeath

Sean Butler

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Simonstown, Coole, Co Westmeath

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Fiona Butler

Fiona Butler,

Joan Gunning

Lower Coole, Co Westmeath

Joan Gunning

Anna Baggallay

Kiltoom, Castlepollard, Co Westmeath

Anna Baggallay

PHOTO 1 CLANSWORTH BOG

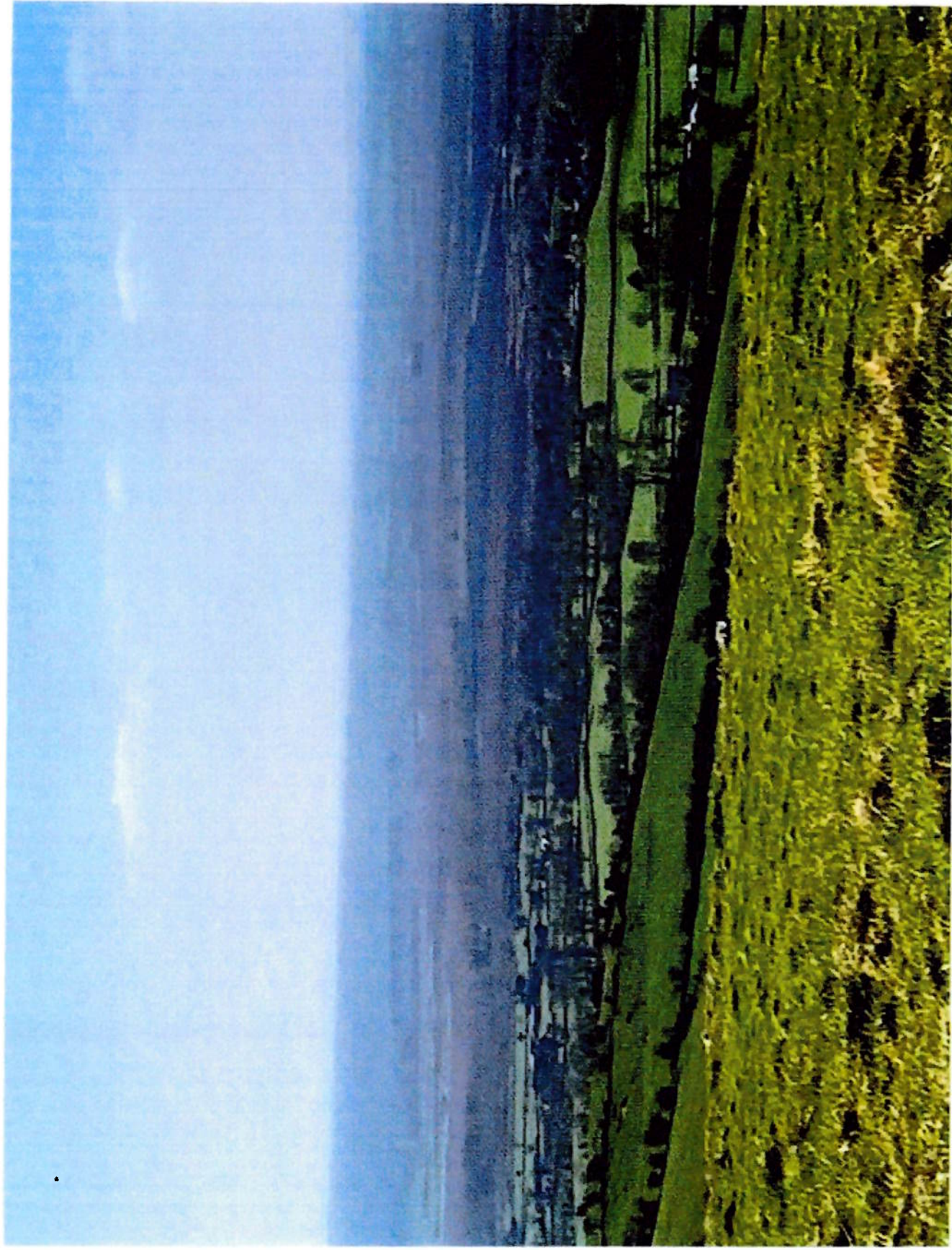


PHOTO 1 TO KNOCKEYON



PHOTO 3 WHOOPEE SWANS AT TWILIGHT.

