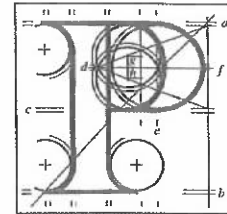


**Our Case Number:** ABP-314602-22



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

Futureenergy  
C/o Sinead O'Malley  
27/28 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2

**Date:** 15 August 2023

**Re:** Windfarm development of 14 no. turbines with 110kV electrical substation and all related site works and ancillary development.

The townlands of Cahernacaha, Gortnabinna, Derryfineen, Gortyrhilly, Rath West, Derree, Fuhiry, Derreenaculling and other townlands, Co. Cork and Derryreag, Cummeenavrick, Glashacormick, Clydaghroe and Cummeennabuddoge, Co. Kerry.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I have been asked by the interim Chairperson of An Bord Pleanála to refer to your letter dated 7th July 2023, the contents of which are noted.


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.

In this regard case numbers ABP-312606-22 and ABP-314602-22 are with the Planning Inspector awaiting completion of a report and recommendation and case numbers ABP-308885-23 and ABP-312659-22 are at Board level awaiting a decision.

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.

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>

Yours faithfully,

  
Ashling Doherty  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737160

Tel	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glao Áitiúil	LoCall	1800 275 175
Facs	Fax	(01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin	Website	<a href="http://www.pleanala.ie">www.pleanala.ie</a>
Ríomhphost	Email	<a href="mailto:bord@pleanala.ie">bord@pleanala.ie</a>

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde	64 Marlborough Street
Baile Átha Cliath 1	Dublin 1
D01 V902	D01 V902



Marine - C. Cunningham

**Jennifer Carleton**

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**From:** Bord  
**Sent:** Friday 7 July 2023 15:36  
**To:** Jennifer Carleton; Thomas Edlin  
**Subject:** FW: Correspondence FAO Ms. Oonagh Buckley  
**Attachments:** 230706\_ABP Letter\_Final.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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**From:** Sinead O'Malley <sinead.omalley@futureenergyireland.ie>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 7, 2023 10:15 AM  
**To:** Bord <bord@pleanala.ie>  
**Cc:** Philip.Newsome@decc.gov.ie; paul.hogan@dhlgh.gov.ie; Peter Lynch <Peter.Lynch@futureenergyireland.ie>  
**Subject:** Correspondence FAO Ms. Oonagh Buckley

Dear Sir, Madam,  
Please find attached a letter for the attention of Ms. Oonagh Buckley. I would be grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this email.  
Many thanks

**Sinead O'Malley**  
Planning Manager  
M\_353 86 9193316

**FuturEenergy**  
Ireland  
[futureenergyireland.ie](http://futureenergyireland.ie)



FAO: Ms. Oonagh Buckley  
Interim Chairperson, An Bord Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1, D01V902

By email to: [bord@pleanala.ie](mailto:bord@pleanala.ie)

7th July 2023

Dear Ms. Buckley,

FuturEnergy Ireland (FEI) is a joint venture company owned on a 50:50 basis by Coillte and ESB. We are one of the largest dedicated developers of onshore wind in Ireland and our mission is to maximise the potential of our national resources and accelerate Ireland's transformation to a low carbon economy.

Further to our letter of 20<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2023 (copy attached), which highlighted the importance of onshore wind and associated grid projects and the need for urgent prioritisation of same to meet Ireland's national energy and climate change targets, we wish to bring to the Board's attention to an upcoming critical milestone in the delivery of these projects. In doing so, we are highlighting a set of circumstances which also arose in 2022 and which was brought to the Board's attention at that stage by various parties, including the industry body, *Wind Energy Ireland*.

In September and October 2023, EirGrid will open its time-limited annual window for renewable energy projects to apply for a grid connection through their Enduring Connection Policy process. Only renewable energy projects that have a valid planning permission will be eligible to apply. This opportunity has not occurred since September 2022 and, for other reasons linked to the refresh of the underlying policy, is not scheduled for any future date past 2023. This makes the forthcoming Sept.-Oct. window absolutely mission critical in order to ensure that Ireland can remain on track to meet our 2025 and 2030 renewable energy targets. As you may be aware, for a number of reasons, Ireland is already falling behind the pace in this area, as recently highlighted by the EPA<sup>1</sup>.

The timely output of onshore wind energy project decisions from the planning system to enable entry the EirGrid process is a key and critical enabler to achieving Ireland's Sectoral Emissions Ceilings. We are not aware of any positive decision for a new onshore wind farm project on a greenfield site issuing from ABP since the end of September 2022. This is a very concerning matter given Government targets require the electricity sector to deliver the greatest contribution, in the form of a net carbon reduction of 75% by 2030 and the Climate Action Plan 2023 seeks to achieve 6GW onshore wind target by 2025 and 9GW by 2030. We currently have circa 4.5GW connected to the system which is a shortfall of an equivalent 4.5GW.

For the above reasons we believe it is vital that onshore wind projects currently with the Board, particularly those in the system in excess of 12 months, are determined as soon as possible and receive all the necessary supports within the organization to enable high quality, timely assessment, and the resulting determinations. We have a number of such projects which are listed in the annex to this letter. We would be grateful for your consideration of the above matters as a matter of urgency.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epa.ie/news-releases/news-releases-2023/ireland-projected-to-fall-well-short-of-climate-targets-says-epa>

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me. We note your imminent departure to the SG role in DECC. We wish you every success in that role, and would ask for this letter to be brought to the attention of your successor in ABP.

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Yours sincerely,



Peter Lynch  
Chief Executive, FuturEnergy Ireland

Cc: Mr. Philip Newsome, Principal Officer, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Mr. Paul Hogan,  
Acting Assistant Secretary Planning, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

**Annex - Listing of FuturEnergy Ireland's projects with ABP**

ABP Ref	Wind Farm Project	County	Type of Submission	Date of ABP Submission	Length of Time with ABP to date
310789 (linked to 310788)	8 turbines	Leitrim	Appeal	08/07/2021	24 months
310788 (linked to 310789)	2 turbines	Sligo	Appeal	08/07/2021	24 months
308885	22 turbines	Cork	SID	11/12/2020	30 months
312606	20 turbines	Cork	SID	28/01/2022	17 months
312659	15 turbines	Donegal	SID	04/02/2022	17 months
314602	14 turbines	Cork and Kerry	SID	09/09/2022	10 months

308885 - Marine development. Lodged Dec. 2020. At Board level. (M. Long)

312606 - Marine development. Lodged Jan 2022. At Inspectorate level (N. Haverly).

312659 - Marine development. Lodged Feb 2022. With SIDs???

314602 - Marine development. Lodged Sept. 2022. At Inspectorate level. (K. Hamilton)

Copy of FEI letter to ABP of 20<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2023

FAO: Ms. Oonagh Buckley  
Interim Chairperson, An Bord Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1, D01V902

By email to: [bord@pleanala.ie](mailto:bord@pleanala.ie)

20 February 2023

Dear Ms. Buckley,

Firstly, and by way of introduction, FuturEnergy Ireland (FEI) is a joint venture company owned on a 50:50 basis by Coillte and ESB. This collaboration combines the State's strongest assets and expertise in onshore renewable energy development. We are one of the largest dedicated developers of onshore wind in Ireland and our mission is to maximise the potential of our national resources and accelerate Ireland's transformation to a low carbon economy.

We are very aware of the challenges which the Board is facing at this time and wish to express our support to the entire organisation as it works its way through these matters. In this regard, we closely followed the prelegislative scrutiny of the Planning and Development Bill 2022 at the Joint Committee, Housing Local Government and Heritage on 9 February 2023 and are aware of the current limited resources available to the Board and its request for patience from industry as it works through its backlog. We further understand from the 9 February meeting that the Board is working extremely hard to make its existing systems work as efficiently as possible. We note that this includes managing the workload of the Board, prioritizing files for decision making and upskilling new Board members.

The purpose of this letter is to highlight the importance of onshore wind and associated grid projects and the need for prioritizing such projects to meet Ireland's national energy and climate change targets by 2025, 2030 and beyond. FuturEnergy Ireland currently has interests in 8 onshore wind projects that are before the Board, 5 of which have been with the Board for between 18 and 26 months. Further details in respect of these projects are set out in the Annex to this letter.

#### The Importance of Onshore Wind and associated Grid Infrastructure

The urgency of reducing carbon emissions and developing renewable energy projects in Ireland continues to increase. This increase is due to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, European Union initiatives to expedite renewable energy penetration and the unprecedented climatic conditions being experienced in recent times.

In July 2022, the Government adopted Sectoral Emissions Ceilings which refine the ambitious greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for this decade and beyond<sup>2</sup>. As you may be aware, these targets require the electricity sector to deliver the greatest contribution, in the form of a net carbon reduction of 75% by 2030. FuturEnergy Ireland is positioned to be a key driver of change in this regard. The timely output of renewable energy projects from the planning system is a key and critical enabler to achieving Sectoral Emissions Ceilings.

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<sup>2</sup> 51% reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050 - made legally binding by the *Climate Action and Low Carbon development (Amendment) Act 2021*

This principle of urgency is also a key feature of the recent *REPower EU* proposals. The European Commission, since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, continues to promote initiatives which drastically accelerate the transition to clean energy, thereby increasing Europe's energy independence. The latest such initiative comes in the form of Council Regulation (EU) 2022/2577<sup>2</sup>, which establishes temporary rules of an emergency nature to accelerate the permit-granting process applicable to the production of energy from renewable energy sources.

The Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2021 required 80% of our electricity to come from renewable sources by 2030 comprising up to 8GW of onshore wind. CAP 2023, recently published in December 2022, increases the onshore wind target from 8GW to 9GW, 6GW of which is to be delivered by 2025. This represents an overall increase from ~4.5GW connected onshore wind today. It has taken circa 20 years to deliver the existing fleet and the challenge is to double this capacity in the next 7 years. FEI is currently targeting the delivery of 1,000 MW of new onshore wind projects in the period to 2030. Our ability to deliver on this goal and make a significant contribution towards the attainment of the targets requires a functioning permitting system.

Given the relatively high likelihood that a significant portion of new offshore capacity will only start to be delivered onto the system post 2028 and with a regulatory framework which is still becoming operational, there is real potential that anticipated renewable electricity volumes may fall short of the targets now set out in Climate Action Plan 2023. Such a likely scenario therefore increases the reliance on onshore wind. It is wholly apparent from national and EU policies, and based on current trajectories, that onshore wind is a critical form of infrastructure which is essential to address our climate and energy security crises and will continue to have the vital and leading role that it currently has in the Climate Action Plan.

Our company has a strong record of responsible development and delivery of renewable energy infrastructure of scale which can play a meaningful role in climate action, while mitigating against security of supply concerns, and making a lasting impact on local communities through benefit funds, rates contributions and unique amenity offerings. Planning consent for a wind project is also required before it can apply to Eirgrid or ESBN for a grid connection offer through their Enduring Connection Policy process, for which the next batch application window will open later this year. For the above reasons we believe it is vital that onshore wind projects currently with the Board, particularly those in the system in excess of 18 months are determined as soon as possible. We respectfully request that, where possible, these projects are prioritized and a timely determination is made.

It will also be vital for the Board to prioritise the processing of wind farm grid connection planning applications where these are not included in a wind farm project's original planning application. In many cases, grid connection planning applications are for projects which are already in receipt of a grid connection offer from EirGrid or ESB Networks. Delays in achieving planning grants for such grid connections could result in those agreements being terminated and projects not proceeding or being significantly delayed.

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

Yours sincerely,



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<sup>2</sup> The Regulation was published in the EU's Official Journal on 29 December 2022.

Peter Lynch  
Chief Executive, FuturEnergy Ireland

Cc: Ms Marcella Doyle, Senior Administrative Officer, ABP; Ms Sinead O'Malley, Planning Manager, FuturEnergy Ireland

#### Annex - Listing of FuturEnergy Ireland's projects with ABP

ABP Ref	Wind Farm Project	County	Type of Submission	Date of ABP Submission	Length of Time with ABP to date
309937	7 turbines	Carlow	Appeal	13/04/2021	22 months
310789 (linked to 310788)	8 turbines	Leitrim	Appeal	08/07/2021	19 months
310788 (linked to 310789)	2 turbines	Sligo	Appeal	08/07/2021	19 months
311044	10 turbines	Clare	Appeal	06/08/2021	18 months
308885	22 turbines	Cork	SID	11/12/2020	26 months
312606	20 turbines	Cork	SID	28/01/2022	12 months
312659	15 turbines	Donegal	SID	04/02/2022	12 months
314602	14 turbines	Cork and Kerry	SID	09/09/2022	5 months
314127-22	110kV Grid Connection	Cork	SID Pre application Determination	20/07/2022	7 months