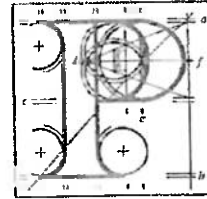


Our Case Number: ABP-316025-23

Planning Authority Reference Number:



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Dr Daniel Devenney
Derrylaconnell
Doochary
Co. Donegal
F94W312

Date: 11 May 2023

Re: Wind energy development including 19 turbines and all associated works.
Townlands of Clogherachullion, Cloghercor, Derryloaghan, Aghayeevoge, Cashelreagh Glebe,
Darney, Drumard, and Drumnacross Co. Donegal

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,

Niamh Thornton
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737247

BL50A

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64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

To: An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough St
Dublin 1

30th April 2023

Submission on planning Application number 316025

Dear Sir/Madam

I write in strong objection to the proposed Cloghercor Wind farm.

Whilst I acknowledge the importance of renewable energy, I strongly believe the proposed location is not suitable, and if anything could not be a worse location.

The Gweebarra Valley is a highly scenic and picturesque area in Western Donegal where its sense of remote and unspoilt wilderness needs to be preserved, at all costs. The Gweebarra River runs from Lough Barra in the East and winds its way 32 Km to reach the Atlantic Ocean in the West.

As it approaches within 18-20 km from the ocean it runs into a deep valley where small farms brighten the northern aspect with green fields. The northside is populated by small farm holdings where a sense of traditional Ireland is maintained with every season bringing a different vibe. I/those living here are lucky enough to look directly onto one of the best maintained wildernesses in the country, which is the area of the proposed windfarm.

I was born and reared on a small farm in Derrylaconnell Near. I work as a Cardiologist in Australia and make the trip home at least twice per year with the favourite time being Spring during the lambing season. I bought a farm in Derrylaconnell Near in 2018 (F94 W312) and hope to move back in the next five years to work as a local Cardiologist and run a small farm also.

I have travelled widely including South & Central America, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. In all my travels there is nothing quite like the Gweebarra Valley. The sense of isolation and pure beauty, even compared to the remainder of Ireland is palpable and must be preserved.

Let me try set the demonstrate how beautiful life is here by bringing you through a scene from each season.

Spring is a particularly special time when the fields start to get green, trees bud, daffodils and tulips bloom and young lambs play along the ditches above the Gweebarra River. The view is spectacular (photo one enclosed with the forest in the background, the area of the proposed Wind farm). How could we destroy this? The turbines will overpower all views and dominate the mountain view and skylines.

Summer brings an erie misty feel along the valley. The mist and drizzle ebbs to the bottom of the valley, clearing at times to show the remote and wild south of the Valley. The forest rises from the river to meet the mountains tops, completely desolate and unspoilt – I speak of the area of the proposed Wind farm. Hot summer days make the valley sparkle, bringing the locals and tourists together in appreciation of just how beautiful this part of Ireland is and “how lucky we are to have it on our doorstep?” everyone asks.

Autumn brings dark nights but also some spectacularly moonlit ones. The moon light reflects in the river and luminates the whole valley. Roars of wild stags during mating season and the sound of wild birds brings a uniquely haunting feel to the valley. The roar of the stags comes from deep within the forest (soon set for destruction should this project proceed). The sound can be heard for kilometres on a peaceful and still night. There is no doubt this would be a thing of the past should this project be given the go ahead. Herds of deer would be displaced and replaced by the constant swishing sound of massive rotating wind turbines. The sound of the various wildlife and the sound of silence which is so eagerly sought after in these hectic times gone forever.

Winter brings frosty mornings and snow-capped mountains – the crisp and silent winter air is second to none. People gaze through their front windows at the mountain tops without distraction, all in appreciation of the sense of simple stillness. Rotating blades visible to all households on the northern aspect would be their new focus, an ultimate nuisance destroying this sense of tranquillity and isolation. People would not be fit to focus beyond high-speed rotating blades of Irelands tallest turbines, dominating the mountain views and destroying the skyline.

I ask that you favourable look at my objection for the following reasons and highlighted in the above description of people’s everyday life as it presently stands.

1. Negative impact on landscape character

This is something that the Wind Energy Guidelines advocate against.

Views from private households

The view from every single household in the area and in particular those on the northern aspect of the valley will be affected and every single townland from Corr point (on west) into the village of Doochary (on East), and well beyond. The turbines will dominate their view, dominate the view of the mountains and dominate the view of the skyline lacking any integration into the countryside. This goes against the Donegal County Council Development plan and one of the main reasons this project should not be allowed to proceed.

Wild Atlantic way

The proposed wind turbines would be visible for a stretch of 25-30 Km of the Wild Atlantic Way (N56) – from leaving Dungloe to Mass heading south and vice versa heading North. This is some of the absolute highlight of the complete route from North Donegal to South Cork. There is no doubt this will adversely affect tourism in the area which people are highly dependent on.

Other stunning drives and photostops

The views of equally as stunning drives would be affected, some but not all below.

- Dungloe to Fintona (R252) – Test mast is currently visible well North of Doochary and this is only half of the proposed height.
- Glendowan to Doochary (R254)
- The view from the Gweebarra bridge would be destroyed – a popular photo stop on the Wild Atlantic Way. Please see photo enclosed on the view at sunrise April 23. To destroy this view would be unforgivable.

2. Ecology

Destruction and fragmentation of habitats of wildlife and pollution

High chance of land slippage, evidence of slides already visible with newly exposed rock, increased risk given high rainfall in this area, unable to predict accurately changing weather trends due to Global Warming.

A photo depicting the amount of surface water in one of the many streams from the proposed site on an average April day (2023)

Contamination of Gweebarra and its effect on salmon population – one of only a few salmon rivers in Ireland.

3. Health concerns

Uranium

It is well known that there are Uranium deposits within the soil and rocks in the area from the sampling in the late 1970s/ early 1980s. Uranium is highly carcinogenic. Any surface disruption would inevitably release this toxic substance which results in water and air pollution putting the local inhabitants at increased risk to cancer of all types. Leaching would result from any surface disruption never mind the construction of 19 x 200 meter high industrial wind turbines, four borrow pits, construction of a substation, road creation, and peat extraction.

It is also unknown what effect this would have on the wildlife in the area also.

Bisphenols.

Wind turbine blades are coated with a highly poisonous epoxy resin which contains Bisphenols. These wash off in the rain. Donegal receives high levels of rainfall and the amount of contamination is immeasurable. Again, this poses a significant threat to both human and animal health.

Shadow Flicker

The Gweebarra valley is a highly picturesque and very unique area where the majority of the population live on the south facing northern slopes. Small farm holdings rise from the Gweebarra River and stretch towards the family home and the more mountainous part of the farm. The Gweebarra river stretches 32 Km from Lough Barra to the Atlantic Ocean. The living area/sitting room of each dwelling looks out over the remote, rugged, and highly scenic southside of the Gweebarra river – the area of the proposed wind farm. Construction and the presence in itself, of 19 wind turbines, a substation etc would change this uniquely serene, tranquil and relaxing haven forever, both for the local population and the high amount of tourists who travel here specifically for this reason. This is what the locals have are customized to what the tourists seek away from their busy and hectic live in urban areas in which they live.

Noise

Low frequency noise / infrasound can cause interfere with sleep in up to 15% of the population. Sleep disruption can lead to all sorts of health issues including increased cardiovascular events (heart attack/heart failure and death), palpitations, headaches, anxiety/depression. Some of the dwellings are with 500m of the windfarm.

Light pollution

There is currently a 100-meter-tall wind tester mast erected directly opposite Derrylaconnell/Derryhenny townlands. It has a bright red aviation warning light on top. This light can easily be seen from within well lighted homes on the north side of the river as well as from kilometres away, (photo enclosed). The proposed windfarm plans 19 turbines which are twice as tall as the current mast. There would also be light emanating from the proposed substation. All of this combined result in flashing lights by day and by night. This would be the death of our dark peaceful nights in our valley as we know them. At present all we have is the sound of wildlife in darkest of nights or on a beautiful moonlit night. This change would adversely affect sleeping patterns of the local inhabitants and lead to the health concerns outlined in number point No. 4.

Impact on exercise regime of local inhabitants.

The road running along the north of the Gweebarra river is quite a busy one with traffic from the population that live there and more so during periods of increased tourism to the area. On the contrary the road that runs on the south side is quiet with minimal traffic. This

provides the residents with a safer place to engage in physical exercise. People from all around travel by foot or by car to this area to walk/jog/run/cycle without the same risk of being knocked over/involved in car accident and which also acts as a motivating factor to engage in physical exercise. The closest gym is anything up 9 Or 10 Km and relatively expensive for some of the locals. Physical exercise is an extremely important and necessary component for optimal physical and mental health, of all age groups. The industrialisation on the valley with the proposed windfarm would end this as its currently exists. The proposed walking paths through the farm is laughable – no one is going to exercise in an industrial estate where turbines can fall / blades can fly off without warning as reported in the media – a simple google search would deter anyone from this.

Health on Elderly and community division

There is a sense of invasion of our valley and division withing the community even at this stage. This has a clearly visible impact on the mental health of the community and in particular the elderly/vulnerable component of the community. We ask that you expedite this process to alleviate the people from ongoing anxiety and concern.

Property Devaluation.

The farm I purchased in 2018 is in close proximity and looks out onto the forest set for destruction. The Massive turbines would deem my land and house less desirable and result in significant devaluation, without a shadow of a doubt. On top of this I wish to build my “forever” home on the land and long for the view of the wild mountains that I grew up. Proceeding will absolutely deter people returning form foreign lands and ultimately result in depopulation of this special part of Donegal. With this the traditions, folklore and culture of the area will be lost and is irreplaceable.

I also would like to highlight the fact that there are so many local people living overseas at present and are likely unaware of this proposal. There is no doubt they would be extremely upset about the what could only be described as the destruction of one of Irelands most beautiful spots.

For these reasons and for so many more I hope you look favourable on this submission and refuse permission for this project. Please find the required fee and two reference photos enclosed.

Your sincerely

Dr Daniel Devenney

Consultant Cardiologist

Sydney, NSW, Australia & Derrylaconnell, Doochary, Co Donegal, (F94 W312)

[REDACTED]

Photo 1



Photo 2

