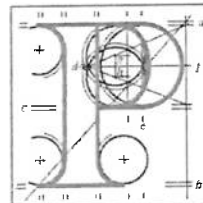


Our Case Number: ABP-317809-23

Planning Authority Reference Number:



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Anne Rogan
Slatt Lower
Wolfhill
The Swan
Athy
Co. Laois
R14NX23

Date: 09 October 2023

Re: Proposed Coolglass windfarm and related works
In the townlands of Fossy Upper, Aghoney, Gorreelagh, Knocklead, Scotland, Brennanshill,
Monamantry, Coolglass, Crissard and Kilenabehy, Co. Laois.

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development 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.

The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

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.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: www.pleanala.ie.

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board or email sids@pleanala.ie quoting the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

PP EGM

Evan McGuigan
Executive Officer

Teil
Glaó Áitiúil
Facs
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

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An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

Monday 2nd October 2023

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	067085-23
ABP-	
04 OCT 2023	
Fee: €	50
Type:	cheque
Time:	
By:	post

Case Reference: PA11.317809

Development address; I the townlands of Fossey Upper, Aghoney, Gorreelagh, Knocklead, Scotland, Brennanshill, Monamantry, Coolglass, Crissard and Kilenabehy, Co. Laois.

Proposed Coolglass Windfarm and related works

Dear Sir/Madam,

I, Anne Rogan (ANNE ROGAN)

write in connection with the above listed planning application. As a local resident with knowledge of the location, I wish to object to the proposed development by Statkraft. Listed below are some of my summarised observations and concerns.

The proposed windfarm development serves no function if it cannot be connected to the national grid. Connection to the national grid is fundamental to the entire project and the cumulative effect of both must be assessed according to the EIA Directive. The Bord needs to regard this proposal as premature in the absence of a grid connection application.

The location of these two clusters of turbines are on two different sites one on Fossy Mountain and the other on the townlands of Wolfhill, presented by the developer as one site, is disingenuous and misleading.

The Bord needs to regard the cumulative effects of both sites of this proposed windfarm on Fossy Mountain and Wolfhill named by the developer as 'Coolglass Windfarm', combined with the following projects which have already secured planning permission.

- a. EirGrid's Laois Kilkenny Reinforcement Project (Coolnabacky 400kv Substation).
- b. 18 No. wind turbines in the nearby townlands of Ballinclogh Upper, Garryglass, Clarabarracum, Clontycoe, Dooary, Cloncullane, Crubeen, Cullenagh, Rahanavagh and Raheenduff. Ref.11.242626 (Laois County Council).
- c. 11. No. wind turbines Pinewoods Wind Farm Ref. PL11.248518 (An Bord Pleanala).
- d. 300 Acre Solar Farm at Bigbog, Coolnabacky, Esker, Money Lower and Loughteeog, Stradbally. Ref.17/532 (Laois County Council).

The Bord must consider the cumulative effects of this proposed development along with the other granted developments mentioned above, all of which are within a 10km radius of the subject development. The Bord must consider the visual impact on the rural scenic landscape close to the Heritage village of Timahoe and the rural scenic uplands of the Coolglass, Aghadreen, Moyad, Scotland, Wolfhill, and Slatt areas. The proposed development alone would form a visually obtrusive feature in the landscape and negatively impact the nationally significant archaeological, heritage sites and sacred spaces. (2003 Unesco Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage) and (European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage).

The location for the proposed development is in an area not open for consideration by the Laois County Development Plan and deemed unsuitable for wind development due to the sensitive environment. The proposed development sits in a Water Source Protection Zone (see CDP map 10.4). The Swan public water scheme identified by the EPA as being 'vulnerable and without an alternative source' is fed by the entire area of the proposed Wolfhill cluster. Water courses and streams which originate throughout the catchment of the proposed windfarm development, ultimately feed the River Nore and River Barrow, which are both noted for its sensitive stocks of fresh water pearl mussels and crayfish. The Bord needs to have regard in particular to the cumulative effect with regard to Margaritifera which requires protection under Directive 92/43/EEC, on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna.

Laois is well known for its peregrine falcons. The bord must consider the locally known established nesting sites of the identified and documented pairs of ringed peregrine falcons, and their yearly chicks located between Slatt, Spink and Dunamaise. The nesting site in Slatt is only meters from the proposed turbines on the Wolfhill site. The hunting ground of the peregrine falcons nesting at Slatt is directly over the proposed turbine area on Wolfhill and the surrounding area (Birdwatch Ireland/NPWS). The bord must consider the cumulative effects of the Coolglass windfarm project in conjunction with the above mentioned projects already granted permission. I urge in the strongest possible way not to hinder the feeding ground of these protected birds. In accordance with the EU Habitats Directive, these birds must be protected.

According to the guidelines issued by The Bat Conservation Council of Ireland(2012), Wind Turbine/Wind Farm Development a preliminary desktop study should include all details of known bat roosts, bat activity and other records of these animals from within a 10km radius of the proposed wind turbine development. The bord needs to consider the cumulative effects of Coolglass windfarm development in conjunction with the above mentioned projects on the locally known bat populations and all wildlife in accordance with EU Habitats Directive.

The developer cannot mitigate against the noise of a 180mtr turbine with a setback distance of approximately 700mtrs to the nearest homes. The developer cannot realistically mitigate how the uphill/downhill gradient will treat the noise from turbines of this measure and what effect it will have on the nearest homes. This development is too close to the homes of local people for turbines of this scale.

The bord must consider the cumulative effects of the Coolglass windfarm development in conjunction with the above mentioned projects already granted permission, on the local community and its people. The community has had no meaningful engagement with the developer Statkraft. Glossy brochures delivered through letter boxes does not constitute public participation. No public meetings were held with the community. Therefore, we were obliged to have our own public meetings in the local halls of The Swan and Timahoe to discuss our concerns regarding the environment and protection of our homes. (Article 7 Aarhus Convention) We are a civilised community of people, all with our concerns of climate change and willing to play our part.

Additional concerns:

It must be noted that this turbine is in an 'Area Open for Consideration' but is not in a 'Preferred Area'. Ref: County Development Plan 2011-2017. The developer also failed to identify clearly the true impact of the cumulative effect of this development on the landscape in this area. The proposed development is found to significantly contravene the Laois County Development Plan 2017-2023. The draft of which has recently been published for review. The developer claims nothing of significance in the area, yet the draft CDP 2017-2023 claims e.g.

'the hills and uplands form important historic features with an abundance of archaeological features and contain evidence of human settlement extending back 9,000 years'

With reference to it's proximity to homes, to residents of Timahoe, Wolfhill and the Swan. As stated by the company but not adhered to: Head of Development at Statkraft Ireland, says:

"As with all our projects, local appropriateness is a core consideration along with careful site selection. The initial design layouts of the Coolglass project, which focused on the capacity of this area to produce renewable energy, were updated to incorporate local considerations. These included the project distance from nearby homes along with local environmental constraints (referred to as 179 residential receptors!!) all located within 1 km of the turbines ensuring the project would be suitable and work well for the locality. The layouts also took into account local heritage site".

The proposed wind turbine is sited in a highly visible location. This is a recognised amenity area enjoyed by its local residents, walkers and bird watchers nationally. This turbine will dominate the landscape. I am a member of a local walking group who regularly use and promote the Fossy and Kyle woods amenity areas. And we do not wish to walk under the new 'amenity park', overpowered by 180m high sentinels.

I refute the above as our hard-earned home is located approximately 700 m from the nearest proposed turbine and a local barrow, of immense historical importance, a Viking burial mound of earth and stones raised over a grave or graves and a local standing stone. These sacred places were used and revered for centuries. And thankfully in Ireland we have managed to keep many of them preserved. Our indigenous sites are worth protecting for our own descendants to remember who they are.

The proposed development will seriously injure the amenities of residential properties and detract from the visual amenities of the area.

The developers plan to pour tonnes of concrete and steel into the surrounding landscape to support wind turbines that are 180 metres in height. 180m I repeat, astounding scale.

ANBORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	_____
ABP-	_____
04 OCT 2023	
Fee: €	_____ Type: _____
Time:	_____ By: _____

This also includes the scale of property devaluation- there is no regard for ordinary citizens who work hard for a roof over their heads and do not depend on state subsidies for anything. As I worked hard for a living, I also tirelessly promoted Green Schools and all matters environmental in the area of education.

I am not opposed to any technology and renewable energy but there are other less intrusive and less overwhelming options. I am opposed to the unbridled expansion of energy projects in natural environments and natural spaces, a process that is increasingly happening today, Wind energy is inevitable, but there are plenty of viable places to locate wind farms. Action is required to deal with global warming. To date, Ireland has concentrated largely on the development of wind energy at the expense of other solutions. Consideration must be given to both energy saving and extensive research into new effective, clean technologies for producing energy.

What a shame to destroy history, heritage and natural beauty. We might find our balance between preserving our rich heritage of our county's past while protecting the sustainability of our future.

From our perspective, it would seem that communities and habitats are just collateral damage: nobody cares. In Ireland, state bodies and agencies are part of the problem.

I respectfully urge that planning permission for this development be refused.

I enclose 50 Euro in respect of this objection. All correspondence in this matter can be sent to me at:

Address:

SLATT LOWER
WOLFHILL THE SWAN
ATHY
CO. LAOIS R14 NX23

Yours Sincerely

Anne Rogan.

