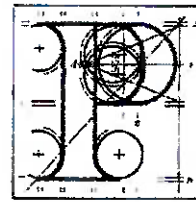


Our Case Number: ABP-317809-23



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Timothy Crowley
Tulip Cottage
Wolfhill
The Swan
Co. Laois

Date: 11 October 2023

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


Evan McGuigan
Executive Officer
Direct Line:

PA04

Tel	Tel	(01) 858 8100
Glaó Áitiúil	LoCall	1800 275 175
Facs	Fax	(01) 872 2684
Láithreán Gréasáin	Website	www.pleanala.ie
Ríomhphost	Email	bord@pleanala.ie

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

An Bord Pleanála
64 Malborough Street
Dublin 1

3rd October 2023

Case Reference: PA11.317809

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

Proposed Coolglass Windfarm and related works

Dear Sir/Madam,

I Timothy Crowley, 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. An Bord Pleanála needs to regard this proposal as premature in the absence of a grid connection application.

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

An Bord Pleanála needs to regard the cumulative effects of both sites of the proposed windfarms on Fossy Mountain and Wolfhill, named by the developer as 'Coolglass Windfarm', along 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 Ballincloagh Upper, Garryglass, Clarabarracum, Clontycoe, Dooary, Cloncullane, Crubeen, Cullenagh, Rahanavagh and Raheenduff. *Ref.11.242626 (Laois County Council).*
- c. 11 wind turbines at Pinewoods Wind Farm *Ref. PL11.248518 (An Bord Pleanála).*
- 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. An Bord Pleanála 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, Aughadrine, 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).

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 Margaritifera, cmsis, 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 Dunamais. 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 board must consider the cumulative effects of the Coolglass windfarm development in conjunction with the above-mentioned projects which have already been 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).

I strongly support the government's plan to reduce dependency on fossil fuel. However, this must not be to the detriment of the psychological and possibly physical health of those living 700m from these huge wind turbines, in particular, the families and very young children of the nearest houses. To have gigantic turbines 700m from any home is not good. The swish of blades and flicker from industrial size rotors would be audible and visible to all the houses within the area. These effects could impact the nervous system. There was no evidence of concern for the effects of these massive wind turbines on the health or quality of life of people living almost adjacent to these windfarms, nor attempt to assuage anxieties by the developers; no open discussion or transparency.

There are many wild spaces in Ireland. Why, for example are there no windfarms in the Wicklow Mountains or in the uninhabited spaces in other counties and off the coast. I am not against the development of wind farms per se; I understand their function as a source of renewable energy. However, I object strongly to the building of these two windfarms in this area. I am deeply concerned at their proximity to the young families dwelling in the area. I do not believe that not one but two windfarms will be built in such a sanctuary for biodiversity and with many young families that could be affected.

According to the Position Paper on Wind Turbines and Public Health published by the HSE Public Health Medicine Environment and Health Group (<http://hdl.handle.net/10147/621467>), adequate set back distances and meaningful engagement with local communities are recommended in order to address public concern regarding public health impacts.

Overall, scientific evidence of adverse impacts of wind farms on health is weak or absent. However, many studies of wind turbines and health have limitations and it may well be that our understanding of types of noise and types of sleep disturbance is not comprehensive. Anxiety and annoyance in itself may lead to reduced quality of life and stress related health effects. International experience with uncertainty in environment and health issues such as this advocates a precautionary approach. I welcome efforts to address concerns of local communities through revised national planning guidelines. In light of the uncertainties involved, evidence on what makes risk more acceptable to those most likely to be affected should be considered.

And finally: Ireland needs a secure sustainable energy supply but all energy sources, whether fossil fuels, nuclear or renewable, have costs and benefits to society, though not always spread equally throughout society. Public engagement and consultation is required in relation to energy, renewable energy and planning policy.

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:

Tulip Cottage,

Wolfhill, The Swan

Co. Laois


Yours sincerely,

Timothy Crowley