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Our Case Number: ABP-317809-23

Planning Authority Reference Number:

An Bord Pleanála

William Carroll
Slatt Lower
Wolfhill
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 Kylenabehy, 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,

EM

Evan McGuigan
Executive Officer
Direct Line:

PA04

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An Bord Pleanála
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1st October 2023

Case Reference: PA11.317809

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

Proposed Coolglass Windfarm and related works

Dear Sir/Madam,

I William Carroll 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 Archaelogical 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, dwrovcmsis, 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 (which is really 2 separate wind farms, one on Fossy mountain and the second in Wolfhill) 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(which is really 2 separate wind farms, one on Fossy mountain and the second in Wolfhill) in conjunction with the above mentioned projects on the locally known bat populations and all wildlife in accordance with EU Habitats Directive. We do not see that the developers have seriously considered or studied or laid out the presence of other wild life, e.g. red squirrel, hare, pine martin, badger, wood mouse, as well as birds, all of which will be severely affected if not destroyed by the proposed development.

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 (which is really 2 separate wind farms, one on Fossy mountain and the second in Wolfhill) 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. Our home at R14Nx23 is within 800 metres of two of the proposed wind turbines which are proposed to be up to 180metres high. These are too high for the setback distance allowed. We propose that no planning permission be granted for such high turbines be granted until a proper review of setback distances be made. The present setback distances from turbines was approved when turbines were less than 100 metres high. 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.

Even in their glossy magazine, consultation for the company assumes that the development is accepted as is and that consultation means how aspects of life after the event can be considered, e.g. quotes from their glossy magazine include: "Feedback around job creation and investment in energy efficiency schemes for local houses is also understood be a high priority" or "The communities in the area around the proposed Coolglass Wind Farm have an opportunity to consider this renewable energy project and how, if granted planning permission, it could make a real difference to the locality" or again "feedback around job creation and investment in energy efficiency schemes for local houses was central to our discussions" or finally "to seek feedback on two separate things, firstly how the design could be worked best to deliver a suitable and appropriate project that would work well in the local area and secondly, to seek feedback on how the community benefit fund that will be associated with this project could deliver a meaningful positive effect on the daily lives of people in the local area and deliver real sustainability" This is clearly not consultation in any meaningful way in getting the views of the local community, before, during and in submitting a request for planning permission. We feel that for real consultation the company should come and meet the communities and hear their concerns and respond to them, this has not been done to date.

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

Athy, Co Laois

R14NX23

Yours sincerely

William Cahill