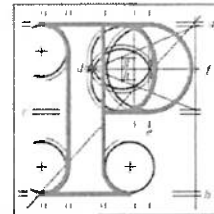


Our Case Number: ABP-317809-23

Planning Authority Reference Number:



**An
Bord
Pleanála**

Yvonne McNamara
Fossy Upper
Timahoe
Co. Laois
R32 AV26

Date: 10 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.

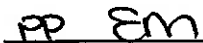
The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

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

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1st October 2023

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
LDG- <u>667164-23</u>	
ABP- _____	
06 OCT 2023	
Fee: € <u>50</u>	Type: <u>PMO</u>
Time: _____	By: <u>Post</u>

Case Reference: PA11.317809

Development address; 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 Yvonne McNamara write on behalf of my family in connection with the above listed planning application. We are local residents with knowledge of the proposed locations and are extremely concerned about the impacts that the proposed development has on us personally, the impacts on our local communities, along with the detrimental impacts on the fragile ecosystem surrounding us. We wish to object to the proposed development by Statkraft. Listed below are **some** of our **summarised** but not limited to all our observations and concerns.

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. The presentation by the developer as one site is disingenuous and misleading and as such, I would urge that they are treated as two distinct applications.

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 proposed turbines are located within scenic rural areas which due to the height of proposed turbines along with the elevation of locations will cause considerable visual impacts across the county of Laois and surrounding counties. This will impact important heritage and tourist attractions within the area including Timahoe Round Tower & Heritage Centre, Timahoe Esker, The Rock of Dunamase, Oughaval Woods and Fossy Walking Trails.

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 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.

The proposed area are habitats and breeding ground to many species of wildlife which we have observed such as Red Squirrels, Hares, Pine Martins, Badgers, Pygmy Shews, Wild goats. The population of Buzzards and Sparrow Hawks has grown significantly in the area in the past ten years leading to a healthy population observed on a daily basis in the immediate area. Many other species of birds have been observed such as long eared owls and cuckoo. Consideration needs to be given to the protection of these species, their habitat and the impact of turbines in close proximity along with the significant distribution of construction and works within the sensitive area. Within the area breeding barn owls who have successfully bred chicks over the past 5 years are present. Their breeding and hunting areas need consideration for these highly endangered owls which are considered red-listed. Birdwatch Ireland (2019) recommends a circular zone of sensitivity of 4km, which the breeding barn owls in the area are well within. If necessary further details on location, surveys carried out and evidence of the presence of this endangered species can be provided. As locals in the area and frequent visitors to the walks and trails within the area, we can personally attest to the presence of these species.

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. As residents close to proposed turbines in the Fossy Hill area who has observed significant bat activity throughout the area I am deeply concerned on the impacts to the population. We have observed the fragility of the species and the impacts of weather events and changes in habitat on the population over the years and were personally involved in the rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration of bats in conjunction with bat rescue individuals in our immediate location in 2019.

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. As one of these families we are extremely concerned on the impacts this will have on our physical and mental health.

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). The planning notices within local papers appears to be lacking with only the Irish Examiner and Carlow Nationalist included and more local means such as the Leinster express omitted. The Site Notice with objection date has been amended and the date for objections moved however I do not see evidence of this reflected within newspaper notices.

As a family we have an appreciation and recognise the importance of renewable energy and have personally invested to ensure that our energy usage comes from sustainable sources and are willing to play our part to reduce climate change. Consideration needs to be given to alternative means of tackling climate change that does not have such a devastating impact on the

environment, communities, families, wildlife, tourism and heritage and we respectfully urge that planning permission for this development be refused.

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

Address: Fossy Upper, Timahoe, Co. Laois, R32 AV26

Yours sincerely

Yvonne McNamara
Yvonne McNamara

05-10-2023

Date