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An Coimisiún Pleanála

64 Marlborough Street

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Case reference number PAX07.323761

RE: Submission/observation to proposed windfarm development at Cooloo (strategic infrastructure development).

Dear Sir/ Madam,

In relation to the case number referenced above I want to submit my objection to this development on the following grounds.

1. Adverse effects on local community:

Barnaderg/Cooloo areas are predominately agricultural areas with small to medium sized family farms. These farms rely on family members for labour and indeed succession. I would have concerns with family members not being able to get planning permission on their own lands if the development was to proceed due to objections being submitted from the windfarm developers. Setback distances may lead to many people not being able to get permission and could force them away from the local area. The R332 runs from Tuam to Moylough and is a restricted road and therefore development is only being permitted on the local roads. It is becoming more difficult to get permission for houses and farm sheds/tanks without the added complications of objections from a windfarm development. The blades also have a cooling effect on the air temperatures around them. 1 to 1.5 degrees cooler have been recorded with significant effects on grass growth and volumes on land up to 2.0km away from the blades.

2. Elevated site and height of turbines

Many of the houses in the area are built on an elevation of approximately 58m above sea level. The proposed development formation level will be approximately 80m to 95m above sea level. Given the fact that the turbines are 185m high, and there is a difference of approximately 37m in ground levels in the area, I and many more residents will be looking at structures in excess of 220m from our homes. This is excessive in height and although we

are in landscape sensitivity class 1, which is the least sensitive, we should not have to look at structures of this scale or massing. Currently a private dwelling house will not get permission if it is in excess of 8m in height, and if the gable elevation exceeds 10m in width the planners will insist on a different design to reduce the massing effect on the countryside. One room deep developments are becoming the norm to reduce visual impact. These turbines will have a serious visual impact on locals as well as people passing through the villages.

3. Sustainability and environment.

The proposed location of the turbines is going to disturb trees and hedgerows, forestry and grassland which cannot be replaced. Impact on flora and fauna in the area cannot be accurately quantified and will take many years to recover, if ever. Studies carried out will not accurately assess the impact of such a massive development on the environment. The amount of carbon produced to excavate the bases for the turbines, produce the reinforcing steel, produce the cement and aggregates and sand, transport the concrete, produce the turbines, transport and erect the turbines and keep them running and maintained will not be offset by the so called clean energy they produce. Oils and greases are still going to be needed to lubricate and maintain the development.

Runoff from excavation work and concrete pours will be difficult to manage given the wet climate we have here in the west, particularly in this part of the county. Rainfall duration and intensity has significantly increased over the past few years and preventing disturbance of neighbour's property will be hard to manage.

The cost for curtailment is being passed on to the consumer through their electricity bills. This fact alone makes the proposed development unsustainable, given the already high prices being charged for electricity.

4. Road network and damage

Many of the local roads in the area are constructed on marginal ground and will not be able to sustain the impact from high volumes of HGV,s. The local council are just about keeping up with the maintenance required. Making a condition on planning to repair or resurface these roads is difficult to enforce as normal wear and tear from locals will be the excuse used by developers so as not to be held liable for repair work. Enforcing planning conditions attached to development is difficult as the County Council workforce is already stretched and significant resources would need to be dedicated to ensure compliance. Significant works will also be required to connect to the grid which will lead to road and field damage as well as local disruptions.

5. Local water supply.

The source protection area for our private scheme is located close to the proposed development. Winter water table levels in some of the proposed areas for turbines rises quiet high and in some cases can be as close as 0.5m from the surface. Massive development of this kind is going to have a negative effect on water quality, at construction stage and during the lifetime of the proposed structures. These turbines have a relatively short service lifetime and decommissioning to these

structures will cause as much or if not more pollution to the area than the construction phase.

6. Negative impact to human health.

Shadow flicker will become an issue during operation when the blades are moving. Given the height of the structures and the elevation of the site, the flicker will affect houses both in close proximity and those that are in direct view of the blades. Noise Figures of 45db(A) are being quoted at 500m away from the blades. The noise beneath the blades is significantly

higher. I have visited the turbines in Connemara and on the day in question the noise level was 102db(A). Topographical features influence the noise from the blades and it becomes uncomfortable to listen to after a period of time.

As a resident of the area I would strongly urge An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse the application for this development. It is not suitable to this area due to the height of the turbines and the impact that they have on residents and the area. House prices in the area will be affected as well as the value of agricultural lands. Those hoping to use the value of their site as the deposit will not be able to do so. This will lead to many young people not being able to build their home and will put more pressure on an already stretched housing situation. People are starting to be refused mortgages until a decision has been made on the application. They are being told that if the development goes ahead, they will find it difficult to get funds.

I would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of my submission on this matter.

Regards

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