

Ballyfasy Windfarm Objection

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Application Name: Ballyfasy Wind Farm

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FORMAL OBJECTION TO PROPOSED BALLYFASY WINDFARM

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to formally submit my objection to Ballyfasy windfarm, a project consisting of ten 180m tall wind turbines, as a TD for Carlow Kilkenny but also as a mother of 4 boys, who live in the area. I am worried about the health implications for my family and friends in the area, that these wind turbines could possibly bring. In the Dail I have called for a moratorium on all wind farms until the regulations are in place. Our electric bills are extremely high, this will not change anytime soon, it will get more expensive because the grid can not cope with high volume of energy that is being produced, and so we the costumer pay via curtailment payments made to the Wind Farms operators.

I would first like to note that this area of Ballyfasy already has 2 wind farms in place, Ballymartin and Ballylog. These wind farms contain multiple turbines of 120m in height and are placed in areas quite suitable for their placement, being set in locations not intrusive or obstructive and of a more suitable height. Ballyfasy wind farm, however, is on a much larger scale and in and is completely inappropriate given the size, community location and close proximity to local residents with a proposed turbine height of 180 metres.

The townland of Ballyfasy is flanked in all directions by windfarms such as BallyMartin, Rahora, Smithstown and the proposed CastleBanny. I am, rightfully, concerned with the concentration of such a large amount of turbines and the cumulative effect these have on local wildlife. The natura and biodiversity report all show the varied and diverse range of wildlife in the area, both protected species and other including Curlew, pinemartens, salmon, otter holts, badger, deer, common frog, newt and a large bat population (52,000 flights recorded in the biodiversity report and 7 species of bat identified). The bat survey in particular raised the issue of too many wind farms in the area being a significant and negative effect on conservation efforts with high potential for maternity roosts on site.

The project is vastly unpopular with the local community as can be seen from the large demonstrations and talks at the local community centres that have had massive attendance from the parish. I have also seen the various newspaper articles about the project and radio segments from local stations such as KCLR and WLR as well as it being highlighted by a number of councillors and TDs in the area.

The opposition to the plan has also been highlighted across various media platforms stating residents, councillors and TD's disapproval of this project with the negative aspects of Ballyfasy windfarm noted such as

noise, environmental destruction, light flicker, size, infrasound, negative impact on property values, Aarhus convention breaches, residential unsuitability, visual impact, road unsuitability, likely pollution of waters to homes due to high radon in area and possible chemical contamination and special areas of conservation downstream from the site. I personally agree with every point listed above and would label the development as preposterous in both nature and conception.

Water quality is a concern as the site is at a high elevation and feeds downstream to a vast array of water tables including Special Areas of Conservation such as the Lower river Suir, Barrow and Nore. Planning documentation stipulates a very real and significant risk to wildlife and vegetation in these waterways through semisolid release, chemical contamination, accidental release of silt and sediment. Ballyfasy, being a rural area, has very little infrastructure in the area for residents such as water treatment and distribution for residents. Radon release is not mentioned though, Ballyfasy is a high radon area. Construction releases this toxic, cancer causing chemical into the air and it settles into groundwater. This water is then fed through waterways into family homes and reports make no mention of mitigation or management. It is worth noting that radon is the second highest cause of lung cancer after smoking in Ireland.

The local road networks are also completely unsuitable for a project such as this, many roads in the area are single lane traffic only and are in a poor condition. The amount of heavy machinery, HGV, LGV and general vehicles that will be visiting the site during the construction phase is more than the locality can handle. A nearby bridge recently collapsed in the area (3 Friars) and Ballynoony to Ballymartin is a particularly treacherous stretch of road with many accidents with traffic levels at their current level. The roads will be in a treacherous state with the amount of traffic proposed (over 200,000 vehicles over two years) and absolutely unsuitable for current infrastructure.

The issue which I feel has the most impact though is the visual impact this project will have. Ten 180m tall structures will be visible for miles in every direction, these turbines are double the size of the Statue of Liberty. Ballyfasy and surrounding areas is not only rural, agricultural land, Ballyfasy is an area with many family homes, there are over 150 residential properties within a 2km radius of the proposed wind farm. To live within a structure of this size would encroach upon these families and compromise the residential amenity of their homes.

The overall visual impact on a wider scale is concerning as idyllic rural landscapes, a symbol of national identity and heritage, succumb to a dystopian field of towering machinery. Ireland has always been a draw for international visitors for the lush, green landscapes, approving 180m tall turbines in the midst of this greenery would be jarring to say the least.

The push for renewables is an important one but we should do so with community involvement and in such a way that respects the area in which it is proposed. Ballymartin and Rahora are prime examples of wind farms done correctly as their size and location are more in keeping with the area in which they inhabit. Ballyfasy wind farm on the other hand in neither of these things, it is imposing and towers over the community and the environmental cost is more than we should be willing to pay.