

John Albrow
Niniane's Wood
Dromsullivan South
Bantry
Co Cork
P75 V573

Tel: 087 237 2513

E mail: jmalbrow@icloud.com

An Coimisiún Pleanála

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Dear Sir

Re: Ref No:PAX04.324165 / 324165

Applicant: Maughanaclea Ltd / Enerco

I refer to the above Strategic Infrastructure Development application made to you by Maughanaclea Ltd, for planning permission for Maughanaclea Wind Farm consisting of 14 no. wind turbines, a 110kV substation and 110kV underground cabling connection and associated works,

located in Ardrah, Maughanaclea, Ballynamought, Gortloughra, Cousane, Coomclogh, Derragh, Glanycarney, Keenrath, Derrynacaheragh, Shiplough, Coolsnaghtig and other townlands Co. Cork and have outlined below my submission objecting to this development.

1. Conflict with the County Development Plan

The County Cork Development Plan (section 13.6, page 296) designates some of this proposed area as open to consideration subject to certain criteria (paragraph 13.6.7) as follows:

Commercial wind energy development is open to consideration in these areas where proposals can avoid adverse impacts on:

- Residential amenity particularly in respect of noise, shadow flicker and visual impact;
- Urban areas and Metropolitan/Town Green Belts;
- Natura 2000 Sites (SPA's and SAC's), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA's), proposed Natural Heritage Areas and other sites and locations of significant ecological value.

- Architectural and archaeological heritage;
- Visual quality of the landscape and the degree to which impacts are highly visible over wider areas. In planning such development, consideration should also be given to the cumulative impacts of such proposals.

In particular points one, four and five of this list are relevant to this application.

The topography of the Mealagh Valley does mean that noise travels in unusual ways and the developer does not state whether this has been taken into account.

The visual impact of this development is enormous. These turbines will be visible across a very wide area. In addition, the cumulative impact of this and other wind farms for which permission has been granted or is in process, means that in this area of West Cork, it will be hard to travel round without seeing wind turbines. This is a rural area, very dependant on tourism, and I believe that if this project were to proceed, it would be very detrimental to that business.

In addition, I believe this would not be good for my mental health. Having chosen to live in a rural area, with outstanding views, and being able to enjoy the flora and fauna of the area, as well as the peacefulness, I think the level of disruption, disturbance, and impact on the landscape would be intolerable.

2. Residential Amenity

The residents of the Mealagh Valley, Cousane, Maughanaclea and Kealkill communities will be severely impacted if this development goes ahead. We have all chosen to live in this quiet rural landscape, which is breathtakingly beautiful and home to a vast selection of wildlife and archaeology. The proposed turbines, at 169m high, will loom over both the nearest residential homes and the wider landscape.

Under both Irish and EU law you have the right to enjoy your property. Noise nuisance, infrasound, overbearing visual dominance, constant visible motion, obstruction of views, reduced sense of rural sanctuary and night time lighting may all affect peaceful enjoyment.

Cumulative Effect

As stated above, the size of the proposed turbines means they will be visible over a very wide area. The R585 is designated as a scenic route, and the possibility of these very large turbines on an elevated ridge would completely alter the character of this area, and undermine that designation.

I believe that when this application is considered, in conjunction with those in the pipeline or recently approved, you will see that it means the landscape would be saturated with turbines which would do irreversible visual and ecological harm.

3. Roads, Traffic and Construction Impacts

The roads in this rural area, are narrow, full of bends and not suitable for large, heavy and abnormal traffic movements. It is likely the roads, verges and drainage will be adversely affected.

The developer is proposing to run underground cabling from the turbines to Dunmanway. This will entail road works for some months, further damaging the road infrastructure, causing traffic problems, and impacting on both local communities and the tourism business that is so important to this area of West Cork.

4. Planning Policy and Guidelines

The proposed turbines would be some of the largest built. The 2006 Wind Energy guidelines were issued when the turbine heights were much lower, and therefore are completely inappropriate for a development of this proposed size. These guidelines do not give sufficient protection to residential amenity, landscape character, and environmental issues.

5. Ecology

The proposed site of these turbines is upland peat. It is an area that has been relatively undisturbed for many years and therefore provides habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, some of which (for instance White Tailed Sea Eagles) are on the special conservation measures lists.

There is so much information now available about the very poor state of Ireland's biodiversity that it seems inconceivable to me that a plan to build these turbines can even be considered. The developer has even said that when the turbines are decommissioned there will be no peatland restoration, so this wonderful area of natural carbon capture will be lost for ever, as will the habitat, and consequently a wide range of flora and fauna.

When I first moved here I regularly saw and heard both Curlew and Choughs. The Curlew are no longer and here and the Choughs are very rarely seen/ heard. I think it really important that we find a way to stop these species from disappearing completely. Wind turbines, 169m in height, situated on beds of concrete will not aid this in any way.

In addition, the River Mealagh is classified as a High Status Objective river, which means that it must be protected, and there must be no change in its pristine condition. Although the report from MKA says that mitigation measures will be put in place to ensure this, there is no detailed plan of how the construction will be managed to actually do this. Who will inspect the works on a daily basis, how will the construction company be told about this and what measures they must take, etc.

Conclusion

In conclusion, for all the reasons I have outlined above, I believe that this area that is the proposed location for the wind farm is not suitable.

Yours Faithfully

John Albrow