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Co Mayo
F26 EW86

Observation on proposed Tirawley Wind Farm Development
ABP Case Ref: PAX16.324258

We wish to lodge an Observation to the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development in North Mayo referenced above.

We are local residents living in close proximity to the proposed development and are concerned that the scale, location and overall cumulative effect of this project would have significant adverse impacts on residential amenity, landscape character, tourism, biodiversity, cultural heritage and the wider rural environment.

Having reviewed the public information provided and the Community Consultation material we wish to make the following observations:

1. Residential Amenity

The proposed turbines would significantly impact residential amenity through turbine noise, low-frequency noise, shadow flicker and visual intrusion. Given the open and exposed nature of the surrounding landscape, there will be clear visibility of the turbines from our home and other nearby homes, resulting in a visually dominant and overbearing presence and significant degradation of residential amenity and quality of life of residents living in the vicinity.

The inevitable negative impact on the value of our property is also of considerable concern and is not addressed.

2. Landscape Character and Visual Impact

The surrounding landscape is of exceptional scenic beauty and forms part of the distinctive coastal environment of North Mayo. The area is characterised by open

views, peatland landscapes, agricultural land, coastal scenery and an undeveloped rural character.

The proposed turbines would introduce large-scale industrial structures into this sensitive landscape and would fundamentally alter its character. The visual impact would extend across a wide area and would diminish the sense of remoteness, natural beauty and landscape integrity that currently defines the region.

The landscape forms part of the wider setting of the Wild Atlantic Way and is closely associated with landmarks such as Céide Fields and Downpatrick Head.

The visual intrusion on the unique coastal and rural landscape of the area is unacceptable and contrary to the policies outlined in the Mayo County Development Plan regarding landscape protection and visual amenity.

3. Tourism and Recreation

The proposal is inconsistent with the objectives of Fáilte Ireland and the Wild Mayo Destination Experience Development Plan, both of which seek to protect and enhance the unique landscape and visitor experience of North County Mayo. Particular concern arises in relation to the developing Céide Coast walking route and the wider tourism offering associated with the Céide Fields Visitor Centre and surrounding archaeological landscape.

The attractiveness of the area to visitors is heavily dependent on its natural scenery, coastal views and unique sense of place. The introduction of large-scale turbines would detract from this experience and would undermine significant public investment in tourism infrastructure.

4. Environmental Impacts, Water Resources and Carbon-Rich Habitats.

The proposal would impact local boglands, peatland habitats and associated ecosystems. These landscapes provide important biodiversity value and function as significant carbon sinks. The site itself includes sensitive habitats such as blanket bog and areas of ecological significance under the Habitats Directive. The large volumes of peat to be extracted in the construction process and the destruction of these habitats will have long term detrimental effects on biodiversity and peatland restoration efforts.

There are also serious concerns regarding potential impacts on local water sources, springs, drainage systems and water quality arising from excavation works, peat disturbance, construction activities and associated infrastructure. The protection of water resources is of critical importance for local residents, farming activities and ecological health. A significant number of properties in the area rely on springs and wells for water supply and these may be lost as a result of construction work associated with the development.

5. Biodiversity, Protected Species and Bats

The Hen Harrier which is a species protected under the EU Birds Directive, has been observed locally in the vicinity of the proposed development.

This species is known to be sensitive to disturbance and habitat change associated with wind farm developments and may be vulnerable to displacement and collision risk.

There are also concerns regarding wider biodiversity impacts. The area supports a range of habitats and wildlife which contribute to ecological resilience and environmental quality. Habitat disturbance, fragmentation and loss may adversely affect species that rely on these habitats.

For example bats which are a protected species are known to be vulnerable to wind turbine developments through collision risk and barotrauma. Given the presence of suitable habitat, watercourses, peatlands and foraging areas, bat activity does not appear to have been comprehensively assessed.

Any uncertainty regarding the use of the site by protected species should have been properly addressed in accordance with the precautionary principle.

6. Cultural Heritage and Rural Character

The area possesses a rich cultural and archaeological heritage. Particular concern arises regarding the wider landscape setting associated with the internationally significant archaeological landscape of the Céide Fields.

The character of the area is closely linked to its cultural heritage, farming traditions and long-established rural way of life. The effective industrialisation of this landscape through large-scale wind energy development risks eroding these qualities and altering the relationship between the local community and their environment.

There are existing and permitted wind energy developments within the immediate area, including the nearby wind farm permitted under ABP Case Ref. 318701 and there are also further applications submitted.

The cumulative impact of multiple wind energy developments concentrated within one particular geographic area must be considered carefully. While a single development may be assessed in isolation, the combined impact of multiple projects will result in a significant transformation of landscape character and visual amenity.

The cumulative industrialisation of the landscape raises critical concerns for tourism, biodiversity, heritage, residential amenity and the overall identity of the region and would undermine the long term sustainability and attractiveness of the area as a place to live work and raise families.

7. Traffic, Road Safety and Construction Impacts

Construction of the proposed development would require significant heavy vehicle movements, machinery transport and road usage.

This raises concerns regarding road safety, disruption to local residents, impacts on agricultural activities and potential damage to local road infrastructure.

The scale and duration of construction activity would place additional pressure on rural roads that were not designed for sustained heavy industrial traffic. The scale of this impact has not been adequately mitigated in the proposal.

8. Community Consultation and Assessment Concerns

We are concerned that community consultation and public engagement have been effectively absent and we also have concerns regarding aspects of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), particularly in relation to visual impacts, residential amenity, cumulative effects and ecological assessment.

9. Conclusion

Having regard to the significant concerns relating to residential amenity, landscape and visual impact, tourism, biodiversity, protected species, water resources, cultural heritage, cumulative impacts and the long-term sustainability

of the local community, we submit that the proposed project is not appropriate for this location and we request that permission for the proposed Tirawley Wind Farm development be refused in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development.

Yours sincerely,

Des and Terri Kiernan