

Observation regarding proposed

Dough Mountain Lissinagroagh Wind Farm

Case PA 12 324290

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Notwithstanding Ireland's need for renewable energy solutions, it is in the context of balanced and sustainable development of a rural community and its preservation, that I wish to make an observation regarding the said proposed development.

I was born and reared in Manorhamilton, North Leitrim, as were both my parents, my father in Tawney Feacle and my mother in Mullaghmore, Killarga. I returned to live in here in 1977 from Co Louth, where I worked as one of the newly qualified 'pollution officers'. Our four children were also born here. Having left for education, travel and work they returned over time and now in 2026, three are living in this locality rearing their own families as are many of their friends.

There were few people here 50 years ago (15/ sq mile), less jobs, high levels of poverty, low educational attainment and a very negative image of the county. Yet I recall the great pride of the people of the 50s, 60s and 70's in their home place. Those who hadn't already emigrated eked out a living, on marginal land. Government policy of monoculture afforestation delivered by Coillte, set targets of planting a very high percentage of North Leitrim's marginal land, promising lots of jobs and major economic growth. The employment was short lived, the landscape and habitats destroyed and scenery compromised. Forty years later it was clear felled, butchered and then replanted. The timber was drawn out by contractors to mills in Northern Ireland. By the eighties the policy continued with private afforestation and still very little local employment!

Despite rampant monoculture forestry, it remains an almost pristine landscape and much has been done to improve local knowledge, offset pollution, improve water quality, manage the land, preserve the uplands and improve biodiversity under various EU funded environmental programmes delivered by government.

Thanks also to inward migration, coupled with educational opportunities, employment and community development initiatives, this is now a vibrant and thriving community with excellent services, part-time farming and community rural tourism initiatives, in particular cultural and hillwalking.

Landscape and visual impact with respect to Tourism Development and Biodiversity

There are currently seven wind farms operating out of the North Leitrim Glens. Is the policy to plant the whole of North Leitrim again? At each new installation the scale and height

increases; the proposed development at Dough Mountain will comprise 14 turbines up to 185metres high. There is no doubt that they will impact on the surrounding area, already designated as an area of High Visual Amenity under the County Development Plan. The industrialisation of the landscape will diminish the experience of locals, and tourists who come to the Hill Walking Festivals or those people who simply value nature, scenery and the countryside. It is the very nature of our countryside, the beauty of our Glens, the wild life, the historic sites and the silence that draws them here, and this also applies to our new immigrants and our young people who now understand its value. Falling numbers in visitors, will also directly impact the local economy.

The applicant's own surveys acknowledge the impact on bird and wildlife, in particular the hen harrier breeding programme. While acknowledging the need for more renewable energy, surely the proposed development is directly in contravention of the EU Habitats Directive and Environmental programmes delivered by the Dept of Agriculture.

Suitability of the Location for Construction

My primary concern, however, regarding the development of this wind farm is the suitability of the ground on Dough Mountain for its development. Dough Mountain is primarily blanket bog, a carbon sink and limestone. Heavy rainfall is retained here or runs down channels in the limestone to streams and rivers. The scale of excavation, the peat disturbance and the associated infrastructure including, foundations, hard standing areas and access roads can only have a massive environmental impact on the landscape.

The applicant planning documents acknowledge the need for 'extensive mitigation of peatland, sensitive habitats, groundwater vulnerability, karst features and hydrological connectivity...' Given the increasingly high levels of rainfall in North Leitrim, soft unstable ground, historic incidences of bog movement and the uncertainty of climate, how can it be possible for the applicant to mitigate these or indeed to prevent serious accidents? I refer in this case to the huge forestry landslide at Shass Mountain near Drumkeerin in 2020 and also the death of a young man working at another Wind Farm site in that area, both incidents during heavy rainfall.

Finally a project of this size and scale, is completely unsuitable to rural uplands of the west and north west and is, in my view short sighted. This approach to harnessing renewable energy has the potential to repeat the mistakes of the policy of blanket afforestation. It will result in the destruction of the Blanket Bog on Dough, a natural sequester of carbon and water. Its construction will destroy the surrounding landscape and habitats while at the same time releasing tonnes of Carbon into the atmosphere.

It is on a scale that will benefit the few, while generating electricity which cannot as yet, be fully absorbed by the national grid. I urge An Coimisiún Pleanála to reject this application.