

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála

Re: Observations on the Proposed Lissinagroagh (Dough Mountain) Wind Farm development

Case reference: PAX 12.324290

Testimony for submission in respect of request to have the Planning Permission for 14 wind turbines and ancillary developments associated thereto denied.

Prepared by:

Brendan P. Gallagher Dip. Arch., B.Arch. Sc. M.A. F.R.I.A.I. (retired architect)

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Save Dough Mountain

Submission requesting An Comisiún Pleanála to refuse Planning Permission for the development of Wind Turbine wind farm thereon

The grounds for requesting the refusal are:

1. The imminent danger of Blanket Bog Slide.

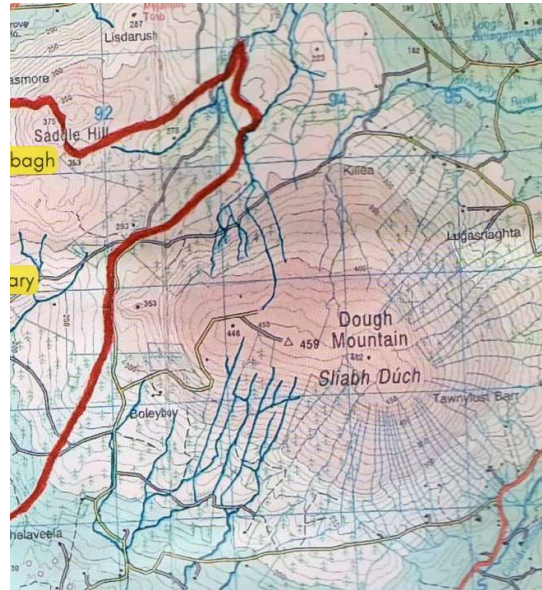
This proposed development will inevitably cause the bog atop the mountain to slide down the mountain, causing extreme damage to the lands, landscape, dwellings, rivers and streams on the slopes and afoot the mountain:

I was the architect employed by the wind turbine company B9 to oversee the development of windmills at Cark Mountain in County Donegal, which was perhaps the first wind farm to have been built in Donegal. I saw first hand there how the construction companies erecting the windmills had to make roads through the bog to build the windmill foundations and erect the windmills. The process was to cut down through the bog to a rock base, and from there to lay a hardcore base as deep as was required to make a level surface for the machines to drive over. On either side of these roads I could see how the fabric of the bog which was composed of the roots of the heather and earlier plants below had been cut through. Luckily Cark mountain was a large flat area with somewhat gently sloping sides. However it was clear to me that where the fabric of the bog had been cut through, and on steeper slopes, this would lead to the bog slip sliding down the side of the mountains. I explained this in a letter to the Irish Times following subsequent Blanket Bog Slides at windfarm developments as being akin to laying a blanket over the back of a leather couch and then cutting through the blanket along the top of the couch. The blanket would just fall away, and this is exactly what happens with blanket bog. It relies wholly on the fabric of the roots of the plants that have grown there for millennia and this interwoven fabric of roots is very fragile.

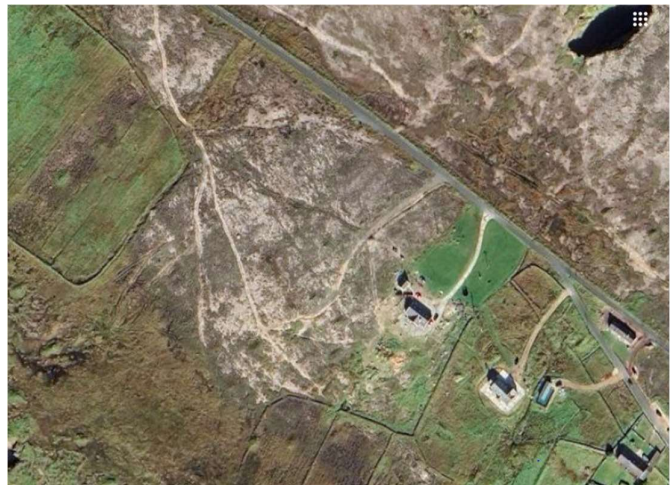
Furthermore, in the mid 1980's, I also witnessed first-hand, how a landscape contractor endeavoured to create a series of flat top banks behind a house at the side of the main Dublin to Enniskerry road, where the land slopes steeply down from The Scalp. Even though this was not blanket bog, the slope was steep, and the damage to the underlying structure of the clay was such that when the rain came, the entire masses of the banks that the contractor had created came sliding down the hill, hit the house, rose above the window sills, came in through the back door and windows and out through the front door and windows, and followed on down onto the main Dublin Enniskerry road. The damage was palpable. Traffic was stopped for several days and the local council had to spend a lot of money cleaning it up. Thankfully the house was unoccupied at the time.

When a Blanket Bog Slide occurs, it takes with it forests and all.

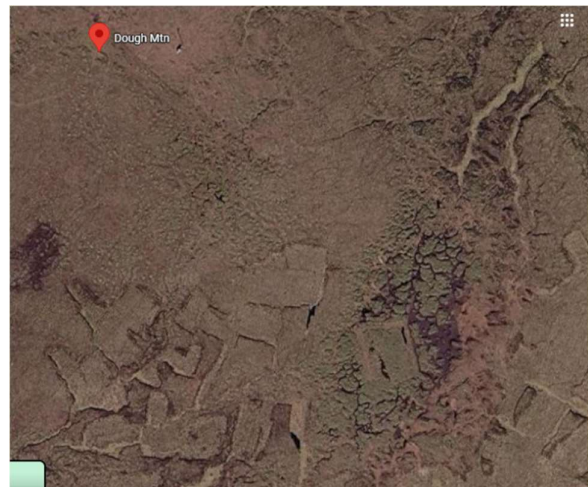
As can be seen from this map of Dough Mountain, it is a conical mountain with steeply sloping sides all around. The rivers and streams flowing out of the mountain at the 420 and 410 meter contours for the most part run almost in straight lines down the slopes with no time to wander as the slopes are so steep.



In this ariel view of Tory Island (right) which can serve as a microcosm of what can happen, the islanders stopped cutting the turf off the island as it was clear that if they didn't the whole island would become denuded.



In the Google Map ariel view close-up of Dough Mountain (lower right), it can be seen how the bog is already under stress and has begun to fissure. This could be from the weight of the trees being planted so far up the slopes here and there around the mountain, as the trees only grow on the top of the bog and as they grow they get heavier and put pressure on the bog below them. One way or another, this blanket bog over the top and sides of Dough mountain, does not look as if it can take any further stress.



Finally, under this heading: The denudation of the bare rock at the top of Dough Mountain will lead to a massive contribution to global warming. It doesn't take rocket science to understand how this can be. Take a 0.5 x 0.5 sq. m. concrete tile and leave it on the ground on a sunny day. It will get so hot you might be able to fry an egg on it. Step on it in your bare feet and you will feel the heat. Then step on to the lawn beside it and it will cool your feet down. Thus it can be seen how the turf/sod absorbs the heat of the sun and protects the rock below from heating up, and emitting out extremes of heat again.

2. The Visual Impact

As an architect, I spent twenty-five years working in County Donegal and north-west Connacht. Working in such sensitive areas as Tory Island, Carrigart, Bellanamore (Fintown), Gweedore and Ardara and south-west Donegal. The importance of scale in the design of the built environment was ubiquitous. If a building was out of scale with its environment, it would dominate the visual appearance of its surroundings, and take from the visual amenity of its surroundings which was inevitably idyllic in Donegal.

Here in this instance, the wind turbines will be some 184m. tall, that's virtually twice the length of a standard football pitch standing on end or the height of a 46 storey high building. In constructing 14 wind turbines this high on this site, that beautiful piece of Leitrim landscape will be utterly dominated by the wind turbines. This won't just affect Dough Mountain, but the whole of that landscape for miles around. As one drives by, or walks or cycles by, no longer will one be able to enjoy the beauty of the landscape in this area. One will be confronted by these massive wind turbines which are of 'high visual impact' and will have completely dominated the landscape

County Leitrim has long been considered to be the poorest county in Ireland, wrought by emigration and unemployment. However in recent years huge strides have been made to develop its attractiveness as a hub of culture and traditional Irish music. Vis-à-vis the development of the Glens Arts Centre in Manorhamilton – with its theatre of thirty years and sculpture centre, The Shed Distillery at Drumshambo, The Drumshambo College of Music, the huge strides the local sessions such as Thursday nights at Davitt's in Drumkeerin, The Island Theatre in Ballinamore, The Dock arts centre in Carric-On-Shannon, the development of the Sailing and Watersports centre on Lough Allen. By the development of these entities, it is hoped to put an end to that heartbreaking road of emigration and to provide for its young people a future and a reason to stay at home. And it's working.

The music comes from the landscape and up until now that could be seen and felt in the hearts of the musicians and people there. The dominance of such a beautify landscape by these out of scale wind turbines will not just impact the visual amenity of the county but will also impinge on the cultural development of the county, the regeneration of which is still only in its infancy.

3. The community in the vicinity does not want the development.

This could be evidenced by the extraordinary turnout of the local community to a meeting held in the Community Centre in Manorhamilton. I estimate that there were about 150 people there which is a very large number for such a remote community. Feelings at the meeting ran high, and a substantial number filled out short notes of why they wanted to see the Planning Permission for this development denied. It is quite clear that the proposal for such a development is causing huge stress for an otherwise quite and settled community.

PLEASE NOTE:

I have left other areas that are of such major importance such as:

The impact on the Biodiversity of the area

The impact on the Health of the local inhabitants and community.

The impact on the access to this area of high amenity on Hillwalkers

And other areas where members of the local community have more experience and are higher qualified to comment on than me, to the submissions of those much more qualified members of the community.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brendan P. Gallagher', written in a cursive style.

Brendan P. Gallagher Dip. Arch., B.Arch. Sc. M.A. F.R.I.A.I. (retired architect)

Dated Thursday 2nd July 2026