

Submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála

**Objection to the Proposed Wind Farm Development at Lissinagroagh
(Dough Mountain), County Leitrim**

Your Ref: PA12.324290

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My observations request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission for the proposed wind farm development at Lissinagroagh (Dough Mountain), County Leitrim.

I am a native of Glenfarne, Co. Leitrim and believe strongly that Dough Mountain, an Area of High Visual Amentiy is the wrong site for this development. I outline here my concerns:

Location, visual impact on landscape

The proposed development of fourteen turbines at a height of 185m, together with the construction of extensive access roads, crane hardstands, turbine foundations, borrow pits, drainage infrastructure, cabling and associated works will have a detrimental impact on Dough Mountain and the surrounding region. This development represents an extensive industrialisation of what is currently an untouched sensitive landscape and will cause irreversible damage to our natural environment.

Impact on the blanket bog and biodiversity

Dough Mountain consists largely of blanket bog, storing enormous quantities of carbon. Disturbance of peat through excavation, drainage and construction releases stored carbon back into the atmosphere and undermines the very climate objectives which the project seeks to promote. It is difficult to reconcile the destruction of an ancient carbon store in the name of climate action. While a peat stability assessment has been carried out it is still not clear the impact of the development such as the dangers of landslides and its consequences – affecting rivers, farmland, and public infrastructure downstream.

Leitrim's County Development Plan recognises the importance of protecting natural heritage for future generations. Once blanket bog is disturbed and upland landscapes are industrialised, they cannot realistically be restored to their former condition.

Dough Mountain supports protected bat species, hen harriers, marsh fritillary butterfly, otter and numerous watercourses which are hydrologically connected to protected European sites. The applicant identifies several bat species and classifies several turbines as high-risk locations for bats. Operational curtailment, acoustic monitoring and adaptive management cannot provide certainty that bat mortality will be avoided over the thirty-five-year life of the project. Measures outlined in the proposal do not eliminate the negative impact the development will have on these protected species.

Impact on Health

Several health issues and their impacts have been identified with turbines - continuous visual movement, rotating blades, aviation lighting, shadow flicker. The cumulative effects of turbine movement, noise, shadow flicker and visual dominance may contribute to stress, anxiety and reduced quality of life for nearby residents

I am aware of legal cases taken and won last year by families because of health impacts such as noise levels, the first 'private nuisance' claims from wind turbine noise to run in Ireland or the UK which placed restrictions on the operation of a wind farm.

Impact on tourism and heritage – North Leitrim is increasingly promoted as a tourism destination for outdoor recreation, nature tourism and quality rural living. The permanent visual impact of fourteen mega-turbines would undermine those objectives and contravene Leitrim's County Development Plan in several important respects. The Development Plan seeks to protect sensitive landscapes, conserve biodiversity, safeguard peatlands, protect water quality and promote sustainable tourism. It also seeks to balance renewable energy development with environmental protection and the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. This proposal does not achieve that balance.

Conclusion

However, renewable energy projects must be in places where they do not cause irreversible damage to our natural environment, biodiversity, rural communities and quality of life. In my observation on the Dough Mountain proposal is entirely the wrong location for an industrial-scale wind farm of this magnitude.

Renewable energy must be delivered in a manner consistent with sustainable development. This proposal fails to satisfy that test.

Conclusion

I fully support Ireland's transition to renewable energy and recognise the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but it must not come at the expense of landscapes, peatlands, biodiversity and rural communities that are equally important to future generations.

The proposed development would permanently industrialise Dough Mountain, threaten an important blanket bog ecosystem, place protected wildlife at risk, conflict with the objectives of the Leitrim County Development Plan and significantly affect the landscape, amenity and wellbeing of residents.

Therefore, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission for the proposed wind farm development in its entirety.

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