

Submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála

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

Your Ref: PA12.324290

Name: Sheila O'Keeffe

Ardmoneen, Glenfarne, Co. Leitrim. F91 A2C8

Phone 087-6470902

Email: sheilaokeeffe54@outlook.com

I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission for the proposed Dough Mountain (Lissinagroagh) Wind Farm.

I was born in the townland of Lissinagroagh and, although my career took me to many different parts of Ireland, I returned to Glenfarne in 2010, just ten minutes from my childhood home. I chose to return because nowhere else could offer what North Leitrim provides: outstanding natural beauty, peace and tranquillity, abundant wildlife, a strong sense of community and an exceptional quality of life.

I fully support the transition to renewable energy and recognise the urgent need to address climate change. However, I believe this development is proposed in entirely the wrong location. Dough Mountain is one of the most environmentally sensitive and scenic areas in North Leitrim. Industrialising this mountain with fourteen turbines almost 185 metres in height would fundamentally change its character forever.

My concerns are outlined below.

1. Visual Impact

The visual impact of this proposal would be enormous.

From my kitchen and back garden I currently enjoy uninterrupted views of Dough Mountain and the surrounding countryside. Instead of looking onto an unspoilt mountain landscape, I would be looking at fourteen turbines almost 185 metres high together with associated roads, hardstands, substations and other infrastructure.

The mountain is central to my family's wellbeing. We regularly walk there because of its peace, beauty and tranquillity. It is somewhere to escape the pressures of everyday life, enjoy nature and spend time together. If this proposal proceeds, Dough Mountain would become an industrial site rather than the peaceful landscape it is today.

One of the great attractions of living in North Leitrim is its dark skies. Artificial aviation lighting, construction works and permanently rotating turbine blades would fundamentally alter this experience and diminish the sense of tranquillity that makes this area so special.

The visual impact would not be temporary but would continue throughout the proposed thirty-five-year operational life of the development.

2. Wildlife

Living in this area provides a daily opportunity to experience wildlife that many people rarely see.

Almost every morning I enjoy watching hares, foxes, Hen Harriers, butterflies, bees and many other species around my home. These animals depend upon the habitats provided by Dough Mountain and the surrounding blanket bog.

I am particularly concerned about the impact on protected species. I currently share my home with bats in my attic. As bats are a protected species, I question how they can safely coexist with turbine blades sweeping through the air at such heights and speeds.

The applicant's own environmental reports acknowledge the presence of protected birds, bats and other wildlife and rely heavily upon mitigation measures, habitat enhancement and long-term monitoring. In my view, this demonstrates that significant impacts are anticipated rather than avoided.

Dough Mountain is an important ecological resource that cannot easily be replaced once disturbed.

3. Water

One of the great privileges of living where I do is having a beautiful stream flowing beside my home together with an excellent supply of clean drinking water.

I am deeply concerned that excavation works, drainage channels, turbine foundations and disturbance of the peatland could permanently alter the natural hydrology of the mountain.

The streams flowing from Dough Mountain eventually reach homes, farmland and sensitive aquatic environments further downstream. Once natural drainage patterns are disturbed there is no guarantee they can ever be fully restored.

I believe the risks to water quality and watercourses are too great for such a sensitive upland landscape.

4. Blanket Bog and Ground Conditions

The blanket bog covering Dough Mountain has developed over thousands of years. It stores vast amounts of carbon, regulates water flow and supports unique habitats found in very few places.

Disturbing this peat through excavation, drainage and road construction would release stored carbon while damaging one of Ireland's most valuable natural carbon sinks.

I also have concerns regarding peat stability. The construction of turbine foundations and associated infrastructure on steep peat-covered slopes carries an inherent risk of peat movement and landslides.

I find it difficult to understand how nearby Cuilcagh Lakelands Geopark is recognised and promoted because of its blanket bog and geological importance while a similar upland peatland landscape at Dough Mountain is considered suitable for industrial development.

If blanket bog is worthy of protection in one location, it should equally deserve protection here.

5. Roads and Construction

My nearest town is Manorhamilton and I regularly travel the N16, often transporting my grandchildren.

The construction phase would involve substantial numbers of heavy goods vehicles together with oversized turbine components travelling through local communities.

This raises obvious concerns regarding road safety, delays, road damage and disruption for local residents, school transport, farmers, emergency services and visitors.

The construction period may last several years and would have a significant impact on everyday life for people living in the area.

6. Tourism

North Leitrim has built an excellent reputation as a destination for walking, outdoor recreation, nature tourism and peaceful rural holidays.

As a member of the Holey Soles Hillwalking Group, I have introduced many visitors to the beauty of this area over the years. Visitors come because of the scenery, wildlife, tranquillity and natural environment.

I fear that replacing one of the county's most recognisable mountains with an industrial wind farm would undermine the tourism product that local communities have worked so hard to develop.

The Glens of Leitrim should be recognised for their natural beauty rather than becoming synonymous with industrial infrastructure.

7. Heritage

Throughout my career as an art teacher I encouraged students to appreciate Ireland's rich cultural, archaeological and artistic heritage.

Dough Mountain forms part of the cultural landscape of North Leitrim. It contributes to our identity, our history and our sense of place.

Heritage is not confined to monuments or archaeological sites. It also includes the landscapes that have shaped local communities for generations.

Industrialising Dough Mountain would permanently alter that heritage and diminish an important part of the character of this area.

Future generations deserve the opportunity to experience this landscape in the same way that previous generations have enjoyed it.

Conclusion

I recognise the importance of renewable energy and Ireland's climate commitments. However, not every location is suitable for industrial-scale wind development.

Dough Mountain is an exceptional landscape with significant ecological, environmental, cultural and community value. The visual impact of this proposal, together with its potential effects on wildlife, water quality, blanket bog, tourism, roads and local heritage, far outweigh any benefits that may arise from locating this development here.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission for the proposed Dough Mountain (Lissinagroagh) Wind Farm.