

Muingmore Windfarm Objections

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Case No. - PAX16.324387

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We wish to object to the proposed Muingmore Wind Farm development on the grounds of its likely adverse impacts on peatland habitats, biodiversity, residential amenity, landscape character and the long-term sustainability of the local community.

A primary concern is the location of the development on extensive peatland and blanket bog. Peatlands are among Ireland's most important carbon stores, holding significantly more carbon per hectare than forests and continuing to sequester carbon when left undisturbed. The excavation required for turbine foundations, access roads, drainage systems and associated infrastructure will inevitably disturb peat soils, potentially releasing substantial quantities of stored carbon into the atmosphere. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) have both highlighted the importance of protecting peatlands due to their role in carbon storage, biodiversity conservation and water regulation.

We are also concerned about the destruction and fragmentation of habitats arising from peat excavation and any associated forestry clearance. The Erris area is recognised for its ecological importance and supports a range of protected species and habitats. The loss of habitat and increased disturbance could negatively effect bird species associated with blanket bog, as well as bats, otters and other protected wildlife, particularly due to the proximity to the Muingmore River. It's believed the corncrake is present in this area recently. How do we not know there aren't some still present in this vast area where the planning is outlined? Under the EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive, any risk to protected species or designated habitats should be assessed using the precautionary principle.

The proposed development also raises serious concerns regarding residential amenity. The turbines will introduce permanent industrial-scale infrastructure into a rural

landscape and will result in ongoing noise, visual intrusion and potential shadow flicker. While compliance with noise limits may be claimed, the continuous nature of turbine noise, particularly during evening and night-time hours, can significantly effect quality of life and the enjoyment of homes and outdoor spaces.

We are further concerned about the cumulative impact of this development when considered alongside existing and proposed wind energy projects in the wider Erris region. The combined effects on landscape character, biodiversity, peatland integrity and local communities may be far greater than those identified when each project is assessed in isolation.

An issue of significant importance for local residents is the impact this development may have on future planning law regulations within the area. The presence of large-scale wind turbines and associated setback distances can restrict the ability of local families and landowners to obtain planning permission for homes on their own land. This may limit future housing development for local people, reduce opportunities for younger generations to remain in the area and place an unfair planning burden on neighbouring landowners who receive no direct benefit from the project.

We are also concerned by the lack of meaningful engagement with local residents throughout this process. We contacted the developer directly by email to raise concerns and seek clarification regarding aspects of the proposal, however we did not receive a response. While we appreciate that large developments involve extensive consultation processes, the absence of a reply to reasonable queries has left us concerned about the developer's willingness to engage constructively with those who will be most affected by the project. This experience has reduced our confidence that the concerns of local residents will be adequately addressed should the development proceed.

The landscape of Erris is valued for its natural beauty, open bogland, unspoilt views and rural character. The introduction of turbines of this scale would permanently alter the visual character of the area and diminish the sense of place that is central to both the local community and visitors to the region.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that An Bord Pleanála carefully consider the significant environmental, ecological and community impacts of this proposal and refuse permission for the development.