

Daniel O'Connor

UP-27/8

From: John Conaghan <johnconaghan.trusk@gmail.com>
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Dear Sir or Madam

Please find attached submission for the above case.

Thank you

Kind regards

John Conaghan

John Joseph Conaghan Kinletter Ballybofey, Co. Donegal

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to object to the application for Substitute Consent relating to the Meenbog Wind Farm development.

I have followed this project from its earliest stages and witnessed the deep concern expressed by local residents, businesses, community groups and environmental interests regarding the suitability of this development in such a sensitive landscape.

The events that subsequently unfolded have demonstrated that those concerns were entirely justified.

This area is far more than a development site. It is part of a landscape that has long been valued by local people and visitors alike. Barnesmore Gap is one of the most recognisable scenic gateways into Donegal. It is a place of exceptional landscape character, natural beauty and cultural significance, forming part of the wider tourism experience that attracts visitors to the county.

Donegal's reputation has been built upon its landscapes, mountains, rivers, coastlines, walking routes and outdoor recreation opportunities. The success of initiatives such as the Wild Atlantic Way has strengthened the county's position as one of Ireland's premier tourism destinations. Visitors do not come to Donegal to experience industrial infrastructure. They come for unspoilt scenery, nature, recreation, tranquillity and a strong sense of place.

For many years there has been discussion about the untapped tourism potential of this part of Donegal. The area supports walking, cycling, angling, wildlife observation, outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism. These are sustainable assets that contribute to local businesses and rural communities.

What makes Meenbog particularly troubling is that the very qualities that give the area value are the qualities that have been damaged.

The peat slide and pollution incident were distressing for local communities. People witnessed environmental damage occurring in a landscape they had sought to protect for many years. The impact was not confined to the immediate area. Concerns extended across county boundaries and across the border into Northern Ireland, affecting shared waterways, shared environmental resources and shared community interests.

One of the most striking aspects of this case has been the degree of agreement between communities North and South with the widespread concern regarding the environmental consequences of this development and the risks posed to a shared natural resource.

It is rare to see such broad agreement among local communities, environmental interests, anglers, outdoor recreation groups and businesses. The reason is simple. The damage that occurred could be seen and understood by everyone.

The subsequent finding that the development was unauthorised due to material deviations from the approved plans has further damaged public trust.

The fact that substantial infrastructure has already been constructed should not become a justification for permitting the completion of a development that has caused such controversy and damage. The people who objected to this development did so because they believed the landscape was unsuitable for a project of this scale. The subsequent history of the site has done nothing but reinforce that view.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that An Bord Pleanála refuse Substitute Consent, refuse permission for the completion of the development, and require the removal of the unauthorised works and restoration of the site to the greatest extent possible.

Yours faithfully,

John J Conaghan

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