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From: Save The Moat <savethemoat@gmail.com>
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Observation – Meenbog Wind Farm

Ref: SU05E.324433 / ACP-324433-26

We wish to make an observation in respect of the application for Substitute Consent relating to Meenbog Wind Farm.

We have serious concerns regarding the environmental implications of permitting this development to be regularised and completed, particularly given the history of the site and the very significant peat landslide which occurred during construction.

The landslide caused extensive disturbance of peat and resulted in peat and sediment entering surrounding watercourses, with impacts extending across the border into the North of Ireland. This incident demonstrates the very real environmental risks associated with development of this scale on sensitive upland peatland.

Of particular concern is that local residents and others had raised concerns regarding the suitability and stability of the site before the landslide occurred. The subsequent environmental damage cannot simply be treated as a historic construction issue when considering whether development at this location should now be regularised and allowed to proceed.

We are also deeply concerned that construction of the development was subsequently the subject of High Court proceedings and was ordered to cease. Substitute Consent should not become a mechanism through which unauthorised development, particularly development associated with serious environmental consequences, is retrospectively legitimised without the most rigorous scrutiny.

The assessment must fully address the requirements of the Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive, Birds Directive and Environmental Impact Assessment regime, including cumulative and in combination effects. Particular attention should be given to peat stability, hydrology, water quality, protected habitats and species, downstream and transboundary effects, and the consequences of the works already undertaken.

The environmental effects of the development must be considered as a whole. The assessment should not artificially separate what has already been constructed from the works now proposed to

complete the wind farm. The previous peat slide and resulting pollution are directly relevant evidence of the vulnerability of this site and the potential consequences of further development.

There is also a wider issue of public confidence. Communities must be able to have confidence that environmental and planning law is meaningful and that development undertaken without the necessary lawful consent will not simply be regularised retrospectively after environmental damage has occurred.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála give the application the highest level of scrutiny and refuse Substitute Consent. Please leave this site to recover, it has rights and it must be left to heal.

Kind regards

Ann-Louise Bresnahan

On behalf of Save The Moat - Save The Sperrins

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