

Scottish Wild Land Group

21/03695/S36 Achany Extension Wind Farm

The Scottish Wild Land Group (SWLG) **objects** to the proposed Achany Windfarm Extension. The proposal is within WLA 34 (Reay-Cassley) and will affect WLA's 35 (Ben Klibreack-Amine Forest) and 37 (Foinaven-Ben Hee)

Whilst we accept there may be a need for renewable energy and there may be some development within wild land areas we, in this case, are guided by the Scottish Government's own recognition that wild land areas are "very sensitive to any form of intrusive human activity and have little or no capacity to accept new development (SPP2 para200). This development of 20 turbines at 149.9m BTH is both new and intrusive. The location within a wild land area isn't recognised by SPP – the fact it is in a WLA is all that is considered.

The BTH and the ZTV (produced by the developer) demonstrates, in our view, that the development cannot be mitigated as required by THC for it to be supported. Indeed NatureScot recognise that the presence of turbines will detract from the WLA and cannot be mitigated against with even good design ((Guidance – Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy development, NatureScot).

The effects would not be localised as suggested by the developer. Mountaineering Scotland concluded that whilst the above 25km turbines are unlikely to degrade the mountaineering experience they can still be visible at 50km depending on the conditions.

A previous application in this area (by the same developer) was made in 2015 It was refused. At the time Energy Minister Fergus Ewing said: "The Scottish Government's policy on wind farms strikes a careful balance between maximising Scotland's huge green energy potential and protecting some of our most scenic landscape and wild land areas.

"We have been clear that wind farms can only be built in the right places and Scottish Planning Policy sets out rigorous steps to ensure wind farms are sited appropriately. I have considered this application fully and have refused permission as the proposal will have significant and unacceptable landscape and visual impacts in the local area and these are not outweighed by any wider policy benefit."

This proposed development is located only 2km from that in 2015 and despite the reduction in the number of turbines (23 to 20) the BTH has increased from 126.5m to 149.9m. We feel the Ministers comments hold as true today as they did in 2015.

Jonathan Binny
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Scottish Wild Land Group