

20th October 2014

Mr Simon Hindson
The Highland Council
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness. IV3 5NX

Dear Mr Hindson

Re: 14/01731/FUL Beinn Mhor Wind Farm

Ramblers Scotland wishes to object to the planning application for the proposed Beinn Mhor Wind Farm, as amended. The main reasons for our objection are as follows:

1. There would be a significant impact on an area of considerable natural beauty as a result of the construction of the wind turbines. Large industrial structures in such a setting, along with the associated access roads, are inappropriate.
2. The area has high value for outdoor recreation activities, most of which are dependent on the relatively natural or wild character of Beinn Mhor and surrounding areas, and these values are likely to be diminished if a wind farm is developed in this location.
3. Beinn Mhor and nearby areas have already been impacted from energy related developments, including hydroelectric schemes, the new Beaulieu Denny power line and other wind farms which have either been completed or consented. The area is reaching or indeed may be considered to have reached saturation point, with Beinn Mhor an example of a proposed scheme which goes beyond the capacity of the area to accept further wind farm development.
4. The Scottish Highlands have a world class reputation for their relatively unspoilt wildness and absence of artificial structures. With Beinn Mhor located on the edge of this special tract of land and water it is especially important to safeguard the approaches to the area from the east and the views from the high ground to the west. Constructing wind turbines in such a location will bring no benefits to the scenery and considerable disbenefits in terms of impacts and perception of the beauty of the Highlands.
5. This area is characterised by high levels of public enjoyment of the countryside, be it from the public road network, paths and tracks and the general mountain, moorland and forest landscapes. There is a risk that, by diminishing the quality of this experience through wind farm construction, public use of the area will reduce, with detrimental economic consequences.
6. Development of a wind energy scheme on Beinn Mhor is not required to meet national or local renewable energy targets. There are plenty of alternative development opportunities, both on and off shore, which have

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either been constructed, consented or are still in the planning process. There is therefore no conceivable reason why the Beinn Mhor project should be approved in the face of the considerable disadvantages associated with the proposal and the absence of any overriding reason, of local or national significance, which would merit approval.

7. The impacts of this project are not confined to daytime aspects. We note the requirement of the Ministry of Defence for the installation of lights on each turbine in the interests of aircraft safety during night time flying. This would represent a further unwelcome intrusion into an area where the quality of darkness of the night sky should be preserved as far as possible.

Finally we note that some representation in favour of this project has made reference to potential financial benefits to local interests that might arise from payments by the developer to the local community. We trust that the planning committee will disregard such financial inducements when determining this planning application entirely on its merits without any reference to such efforts by the developer to gain local support for the project.

Yours sincerely

Helen Todd
Campaigns & Policy Manager

President: Dr Andrew Murray
Convener: David Thomson

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