

**Joint letter to the media on Scottish Government decisions on Stronelaig and other wind farms.**

**Letter from Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland, Mountaineering Council of Scotland, The Munro Society, The National Trust for Scotland, Ramblers Scotland and Scottish Wild Land Group**

**9<sup>th</sup> February, 2015**

Sir,

Few people dispute the necessity of first reducing our energy use, and then substituting the use of fossil fuels with renewable energy alternatives, to help address the challenge of climate change. However, as we have seen, there is public disquiet about proliferation of energy developments in Scotland's wild land areas.

It is vital that any decisions on the location of these developments rely on the fair and impartial assessment of all pertinent information and points of view. The people of Scotland depend on their Government to ensure this happens. Unfortunately, we do not believe that the Scottish Government is doing this in a consistent manner with wind farm developments.

In the face of evidence and objections from many different organisations, communities and individuals, the Scottish Government has approved proposals to site colossal wind farms inland, at Stronelaig in the Monadhliath Mountains, and offshore, straddling the Firths of the Forth and Tay. In both cases the Scottish Government chose to ignore the views of its own expert advisers from Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). Their advice made it absolutely clear that the impact from these turbines will be very significant, and that the locations were problematic as a result. It seems iniquitous to us that, having put in place a planning system which invites the expert views of statutory consultees, the Scottish Government too frequently ignores them if they prove inconvenient. At the very least, evidence of this calibre from SNH should trigger public inquiries.

We therefore call on the Scottish Government to commit to taking cognisance of its own advisors. Rather than force objectors to challenge these decisions in the courts at great expense, the Scottish Government should first ensure they have been exposed to the proper and democratic scrutiny that their scale and potential impact warrants.

Signed,

John Mayhew, Director, Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland

Brian Linington, President, Mountaineering Council of Scotland

Peter Willimot, President, The Munro Society

Sir Kenneth Calman, Chairman, the National Trust for Scotland

David Thomson, Convener, Ramblers Scotland

John Milne, Co-ordinator, Scottish Wild Land Group