

Sirs,

The following submission relates in particular to a wind farm proposal local to us in the Highlands of Scotland but I feel that the points raised are relevant to wind farms and their impact on rural areas all over the world – the issues are the same.

a. We believe that the balance of social change for local people will be negative. We also believe that a wind farms will deter visitors who would come to enjoy the area as an area of peaceful natural beauty.

b. The immediate economic benefits area are obvious but the wider economic impact will be negative to individuals and to the local economy. More on this later.

c. No matter from which direction you look at it, the environmental impact will be devastating.

i. The assertion that wind farms reduce CO2 emissions is highly dubious. Gas and coal powered power stations have to be kept in reserve to meet power demand on the many days per year when wind power cannot be generated anywhere in the UK. These power stations have to be kept hot (burning fuel and emitting CO2), because they can't be ramped up immediately. They are known in the industry as 'spinning reserve.' As the UK builds more wind farms, more spinning reserve will have to be built too. We have all been sold a lie by huge corporations cashing in on vast government subsidies.

ii. The impact on the raptors and bats around the area will be severe as has been demonstrated in many other similar habitats in Scotland, the US and Norway. The wind farm on the island of Smola, in Norway, which we have visited, kills over six sea eagles every year. Wind farms are bad for biodiversity.

iii. The construction of wind farms involves a level of industrial activity completely out of keeping with rural areas, including construction of major roads right through its heart, the creation of vast concrete pads on which the turbines will sit (an activity which releases huge quantities of CO2 trapped in the peat layer), erection of the vast, construction of a sub-station and power pylons to plug the farm into the grid, thundering trucks and other construction traffic for a long time, construction of temporary accommodation for the wind farm construction workers etc. The legacy of the farm will be the pads left in situ, which significantly alter the drainage, geology, soil chemistry and flora / fauna potential of the area.

d. The wind farm cannot be good for vital tourism income of the area. Who will want to come and stay in a high end eco-lodge (or any accommodation), walk their dog, ride their bike / horse, eat a picnic with the significant visual and aural impact on large parts of the area that we want to make attractive to people?

- Wind farms is bound to have a negative impact on the commercial activities of Aigas Field Centre and other local businesses. Amongst local businesses, Aigas Field Centre is the biggest employer in the glen (up to twenty-eight employees in our open season) and we estimate that we contribute well over £500,000 to the local economy every year. This wind farm will be visible from parts of the field centre that our guests currently enjoy in the form of nature trails, archaeological sites, wildlife hides and areas of peace and tranquillity. Our strap line is "*Sharing the Wonders of the Wild Highlands*" – there is nothing wild about an industrial wire-scape that kills the animals we aim to protect and nurture. We can only estimate the damage that this could do our business, but the worst case scenario is full closure, with the loss of jobs and very significant economic benefit that we give the local community.
- The wind farm will similarly have a serious negative impact on the Aigas Trust for Environmental Education, our charitable arm that currently provides education to 5000 local

school children every year and which also provides jobs for three local people permanently (and up to six in the summer.) I should add, lest we be accused of NIMBYism, that our objection is to all wind farms and I personally will be fighting as hard as I can against wind farms across Scotland.

- Wind energy is not cheap, as some assert. It is the most subsidised commodity in history. We all end up paying for it through taxes and higher electricity bills. Denmark, an early adopter of wind farms (which have now abandoned on-shore developments due to the strength of local opposition) now has the highest electricity bills in Europe.

Warwick Lister-Kaye