

By email to: Nicola.Ferguson@gov.scot

Ms Nicola Ferguson
Case Officer
Energy Consents Unit
The Scottish Government
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow G2 8LU

31 July 2024

Dear Ms Ferguson

Coille Beith Wind Farm, Strathoykel, Lairg, Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report

ECU reference: ECU00005173

Background and Context

1. Statkraft has submitted a Scoping Report for a wind farm of 19 turbines of 200m BTH on the south side of Strathoykel, west of Lairg.
2. Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with more than 16,000 members and is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers, mountaineers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland's mountains. We represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering, and provide training and information to mountain users for safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
3. Making an assessment of potential mountaineering impact of this proposal is complicated by existing unbuilt consents, schemes in planning and other scopings. The real baseline is thus unknown and so assessing the possible additional impact of Coille Beith is speculative.

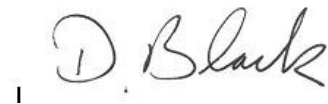
Assessment

4. Mountaineering Scotland's concern at this stage is ensuring that the proposed viewpoints will allow a comprehensive assessment of the proposed development from a mountaineering/hillwalking perspective should an application be made, specifically towards the Rhiddoroch-Bein Dearg-Ben Wyvis WLA to the south, also partly designated a Special Landscape Area. Carn a' Choin Deirg lies within 5km of the nearest turbines and multiple other wild hills within c.15km, with Seana Bhraigh, one of a handful of Munro summits most remote from roads, just over 15km away.
5. The potential for visual impact upon mountaineering interests is shown by the remarkable proportion of proposed viewpoints that are labelled by the applicant as representing hill walkers: 16 out of 22, 13 of which are summits or high ridges. We endorse the proposed 'hill walker' viewpoints: 1-7, 10, 12-20.

6. We wish to point out the omission of Carn a' Choin Deirg despite it being the nearest listed hill summit to the proposed development (<5km). Carn a' Choin Deirg was used as a viewpoint by both the Meall Buidhe and Strath Oykel applications. However, it seems likely that the view from Carn a' Choin Deirg summit itself may be partially obstructed. We cannot be sure since the graphic is pixelated if zoomed to the level required to pick out the summit -we therefore propose the inclusion of a viewpoint at the top of the slope north of the summit.

7. We suggest that VP4 Glas Meall Mor (An Teallach group), VP18 Ben Klibreck and VP19 Creag Mhor (Armine Forest) are probably unnecessary given that they are all c.35km distant and are very unlikely to be reported as having significant impact at that distance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'D' and a stylized 'Black'.

Davie Black
Access & Conservation Officer
Mountaineering Scotland

T: 07555 769325

E: access@mountaineering.scot

