

By email to: Econsents_Admin@gov.scot

FAO Magnus Hughson
Energy Consents Unit
Directorate for Energy and Climate Change
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14 August 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

Skawd Law Wind Farm: Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report

Reference: ECU00002111

Background and Context

1. Fred Olsen Renewables has submitted a scoping report for a wind farm of up to 12 turbines of up to 180m BTH, northeast of Innerleithen on the upper ridges of Windlestraw Law, south of the summit.
2. Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with over 14,000 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, and acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering. Mountaineering Scotland also acts on behalf of the 85,000 members of the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) on matters related to landscape and access in Scotland, and provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
3. Windlestraw Law is the highest hill in the Moorfoots at 659m OD. The turbine bases would be at altitudes of c.420-640m OD, though only two are below 500m. This gives blade-tip altitudes up to 820m OD, making them by far the highest altitude objects in the Moorfoots. Indeed, in the Southern Uplands only the nearby Tweedsmuir/Manor hills, the Galloway Highlands, and the Cheviot are higher. Heading north and west one does not find ground >800m until the Corbetts and Munros of the Southern Highlands beyond the Highland Boundary Fault.

Assessment

4. Mountaineering Scotland is in general content with the proposed methodology in the Scoping Report. It has three observations which are set out below.

5. Q.7 (1) There is no viewpoint to illustrate the potential effect on the western Moorfoots. This has a number of summits likely to be affected and is popular for walks from Peebles and Gladhouse/Portmore.

6. Q.7 (2) There is no viewpoint to illustrate the potential effect on the high ground to the south of Peebles (the ridges above Glensax and The Glen). Again these are popular walking areas. Viewpoint 5 is on the edge of this area but it is in a valley. A much more suitable viewpoint would be where the Southern Upland Way begins to descend from Blake Muir, with an unobstructed view forward to the proposed development.

7. Q.29 It is proposed to scope out any consideration of tourism. This is unacceptable since reanalysis of the data in the Biggar Economics report cited shows an adverse effect on tourism-related employment around wind farms located in local scenic designations. The proposed development is near to, though not in, a number of local scenic designations which could be affected by its presence.

Yours sincerely



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