



**The Granary
West Mill Street
Perth PH1 5QP
Tel: 01738 493 942**

Stephen McFadden
Senior Case Officer
Energy Consents Unit
The Scottish Government
5 Atlantic Quay
150 Broomielaw
Glasgow
G2 8LU

23 January 2017

Dear Sir

**ELECTRICITY ACT 1989
THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2000 (AS AMENDED)
SCOPING OPINION REQUEST FOR PROPOSED SECTION 36 APPLICATION FOR BRAELANGWELL WIND FARM LOCATED APPROXIMATELY BETWEEN DORNOCH AND ULLAPOOL, 5.7KM TO THE WEST OF CULRAIN AND 10KM WEST OF BONAR BRIDGE IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS**

Mountaineering Scotland represents the interests of mountaineers and hill walkers in Scotland and has 14,000 members. We also represent the interests of over 80,000 members of the BMC (British Mountaineering Council) which provides financial and policy support for our work on issues affecting Scotland's landscape. As such, this proposal is of significant interest.

Brookfield Renewable UK Ltd seeks input on its proposed Environmental Impact Assessment of a wind farm at Braelangwell of up to 21 turbines of up to 145m blade-tip height.

The proposed approach to the EIA appears to be standard and Mountaineering Scotland has no comment to offer on it.

Mountaineering Scotland supports the inclusion of the proposed mountain viewpoints, that is numbers 10, 11, 16-19 in Table 3 of the Scoping Report.

However, we note that the description of Ben More Assynt confuses it with Ben More near Crianlarich, a mountain located over 150 miles distant. Ben Dearg is erroneously referred to as one of the Torridon hills. This is confusing as there is a Beinn Dearg in Torridon, a Corbett of 914 metres but over 70 miles distant, whilst the Beinn Dearg affected by the proposal is located east of Ullapool and 1084 metres in height. The description of viewpoint 7 also appears strange.

All of this suggests that the scoping report was compiled by someone who is unfamiliar with the area or indeed with Scotland's mountains, and we hope that these inconsistencies will not be repeated in the EIA.

The closest hill to the proposed development listed in the Scottish Mountaineering Club tables is Carn Salachaidh, a Graham, at c.7km distance. Although Carn Chuinneag is somewhat more distant, the proposed viewpoint there will adequately inform an assessment of impact on Carn Salachaidh as well.

We suggest that a wireline from Canisp or Cul Mor would be useful in showing the relationship between different wind farms given that Braelangwell proposes more obtrusive and higher turbines - at higher elevations - than other operational or application wind farms around the Kyle of Sutherland

The assessment from a mountaineering perspective, which will include impact on perceived wildness, will be very much influenced by the baseline context of the proposed development. This will particularly involve consideration of how well the proposed developments fits with the existing Achany and Rosehall wind farms and the proposed Braemore and Caplich wind farms.

It is hoped that the other applications will have been determined by the time of Braelangwell's submission, the Braemore Report having been with the Minister for several months now and the PLI for Caplich expected by the middle of this year.

We hope that these comments will be of assistance.

Yours sincerely

David Gibson
CEO
Mountaineering Scotland