



Press Release

10 November 2017

For immediate release

Mountaineers challenge claim that wind farms do not impact tourism

New report fears misuse of evidence will endanger vulnerable areas

A new report challenges claims that wind farms have no harmful effect on tourism.

And it does so by agreeing that most do not have any effect.

But the new Mountaineering Scotland report, by its former director for landscape and planning, Dr Dave Gordon, attacks misleading use of evidence which takes examples where wind farms have no effect and applies them to areas where a very significant effect is likely.

Dr Gordon said: "It's like arguing that smoking isn't harmful by examining only the health of non-smokers."

Frustrated at previous reports written to prove a point rather than give an accurate picture, Dr Gordon has drawn together a report which begins by stating: "Proponents of wind farms would have us believe that tourism impacts are negligible. Opponents would have us believe that the destruction of tourism in Scotland is nigh. Neither position is at all tenable."

His concern is that areas essential to landscape-centred tourism will suffer if the evidence from less vulnerable areas is misused to justify development in more sensitive landscapes.

"It's quite true that the evidence is that most wind farms have no measurable effect on tourism. This is the evidence that wind farm developers emphasise when arguing for new developments.

"But there are situations where wind farms would affect tourism – where the tourist economy is dependent on unspoilt landscapes and a sense of wildness and open space. These are often also economically vulnerable areas where any impact on tourism could be locally substantial."

"The areas where we have some data for the effect of wind farms on tourism tend to be those where wind farms have been consented precisely because they are NOT held to be a threat to the landscape. Half of all onshore wind farm planning applications are refused or withdrawn, with visual impact often given as a reason for refusal.

“Mountaineering Scotland has objected to under five per cent of wind farm applications, which have been in areas where mountain landscape is a prime attraction.

“Most wind farms Mountaineering Scotland has objected to on the grounds of mountaineering tourism impact have been refused or withdrawn. Only eight have been consented, and only two were operational by the end of 2016.

“Where applications have been refused or the wind farms not yet built, there can be no evidence of an effect on tourism, but it would be totally wrong to use this as justification for a wind farm in the wrong place.

“My real fear is that developers and their proponents cite research reports which use evidence from non-sensitive areas to claim that wind farms will have no effect on tourism in areas which may be very sensitive indeed. In essence, that research doesn’t prove anything of relevance to those sensitive areas.”

Ends

Notes for editors:

[The full report can be read here.](#)

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About Mountaineering Scotland:

- Mountaineering Scotland is the only recognised representative organisation for hill walkers, climbers and ski-tourers who live in Scotland or who enjoy Scotland’s mountains.
- Mountaineering Scotland provides training and information to mountain users to promote safety, self-reliance and the enjoyment of our mountain environment.
- The Mountaineering Scotland is a membership organisation with over 14,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers, funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, non-governmental grants and investment from sportscotland, which supports public initiatives and services in mountain safety, mountain training and the development and promotion of mountaineering activities.
- Mountaineering Scotland also acts for 75,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC
- Mountaineering Scotland has launched the ClimbScotland initiative to encourage young people to participate in climbing and support their progression. It offers a dedicated website and a development team, which will introduce young people to climbing at schools, climbing walls and via youth organisations with a range of activities and events, while developing kids clubs and providing specialist support to parents, volunteers and teachers.

- Mountaineering Scotland is the national governing body for sports climbing. It offers pathways to climbing coaching, organises and promotes a range of regional and national climbing competitions, and manages the Scottish climbing and bouldering teams. It contributes to the management of the GB teams with the ultimate aim of seeing a Scottish athlete achieve a podium position in the Olympic Games.
- The MCoS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
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