



Press Release

04 August 2016

For immediate release

Wind farm study conclusions meaningless, say mountaineers

Study by BiGGAR Economics is fatally flawed according to analyst

Mountaineering Scotland has refuted a report which claimed to show that wind farms had no effect on tourism jobs.

Major weaknesses in the report by BiGGAR Economics make it irrelevant to the debate over constructing wind farms in mountain areas and wild land.

Dave Gordon, Mountaineering Scotland's Director for Landscape and Planning, who worked for 30 years in information research, analysis and intelligence, argues that the BiGGAR report fails because it ignores the importance of location when measuring the effect of wind farms, and uses sample areas which could fail to show very real effects.

Dr Gordon said: "This report assumes that all wind farms are equal and will have the same effect on tourism, but that's obviously not the case.

"You wouldn't expect wind farms to have any effect in areas where tourism is not dependent on landscape – and all the wind farms cited in this report are in such areas, with none having been objected to by Mountaineering Scotland.

"In areas where the landscape is a major factor in attracting tourism – such as mountain areas – our own surveys have shown that people are deterred by the presence of wind farms. However these areas are not included in the BiGGAR report."

Among further criticisms of the report, Dr Gordon highlighted a basic error in the design of the study. He said: "If you are going to test for any effect from wind farm construction, you need a baseline where there are no wind farms to allow a proper comparison. In at least five of the locations in the study there were operational wind farms already there, and in two more cases there were wind farms under construction. That really is a fatal flaw. You can't have a valid before and after study without a proper baseline."

Dr Gordon concluded: "The study did not show, as claimed, that "Scottish wind farms have 'no effect' on tourism jobs". The best that could be claimed would be that Scottish wind farms *in areas where*

the tourism market is less sensitive to landscape have no aggregate effect on tourism jobs. And in view of the other flaws in the study, even that cannot be said with any conviction.”

Ends

Notes for editors

Further information

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About Mountaineering Scotland

- Mountaineering Scotland is the new name for the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS), which acts to represent, support and promote Scottish mountaineering.
- Mountaineering Council of Scotland remains the registered company name.
- 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 is a membership organisation with over 13,000 members representing hill walkers, climbers and mountaineers.
- Mountaineering Scotland also acts for 80,000 members of the BMC or British Mountaineering Council on matters related to Landscape and Access in Scotland.
- Mountaineering Scotland's landscape and access work is supported financially by the Scottish Mountaineering Trust and the BMC
- The MCofS is a not for profit company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. Company number SC322717.
- The Mountaineering Council of Scotland, The Old Granary, West Mill Street, Perth PH1 5QP