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Dgl Demo 25/10/12  
Peat slides  
could represent  
significant risks

BY CAROLYN FARRAR



The consequences of disrupting natural drainage and the risks of peat slides represent significant risks to the south side of the proposed site for a wind farm outside of Glenties, an oral hearing heard yesterday.

Paul Johnston, engineering hydrologist and professor at Trinity College Dublin, (pictured above) made his submission on Wednesday, during the fifth day of the An Bord Pleanála oral hearing into the application to build 22 wind turbines at six townlands near Glenties.

In looking at plans for a repository for the peaty material to be excavated from the turbine sites, Mr. Johnston said although there were "shelves" within the 4 to 8 degree slope of the repository site, it "remains a slope magnitude of high risk with respect to peat stability", particularly given the amount of water passing through the site.

Mr. Johnston said the consequences of disrupting the natural drainage and of peat slides represent "significant factors to receptors (ie, houses) on the south side of the overall site".

Mr. Johnston said the construction of 25 wind turbines and ancillary infrastructure on a blanket bog-covered ridge with relatively steep slopes requires careful assessment of the hydrological and associate impacts.

"Very little of these appears to have been properly assessed," he said, saying deficiencies in the environmental impact assessment for the project "strongly justify" a refusal of planning permission.

During cross-questioning Gavin Lawlor, director of Tom Phillips and Associates, representing Straboy Wind Energy Ltd., said the system proposed for Straboy had been used successfully in other locations.

Local residents and experts called by the Glenties Wind Farm Information Group, objectors to the application, also made submissions to the hearing this week, as did others who objected to the plan and one of the landowners who has agreed to lease land for the turbines. The hearing into the development by Straboy Wind Energy began last week, called after 15 appeals were lodged against the council's decision in January to grant planning permission for 22 of the 25 turbines in the application.

Cross-questioning had begun yesterday afternoon and was ongoing at the time of going to press.

The hearing continues today. See P2.

