



Cllr. Seamus Ó Domhnaill
Member of Donegal County Council

AN BORD PLEANALA	
TIME _____	BY <u>Rep Part</u>
13 MAR 2012	
LTR-DATED _____	FROM <u>cc</u>
PL _____	Gortahork, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

The Secretary
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

09/03/2012

Your reference PL05B.240166

*Re: Appeal of decision to grant planning permission for a wind farm at
Srath Búí (Straboy), Glenties, Co. Donegal to Straboy Wind Energy.
DCC ref: 11/30127*

AN BORD PLEANALA	
Received: <u>13-3-12</u>	
Fee: <u>€50 Cash</u>	
Receipt No. <u>B.1.7.643</u>	

Dear Secretary,

I write as a local County Councillor in the Glenties Electoral Area on an appeal that has caused much angst in the local community. That is evident in the large number of appeals (fifteen) you have received on this file and I feel it incumbent upon me as a local public representative and chairman of the Glenties Electoral Area to make an observation.

I attended a local information meeting in Glenties in mid January which opened my eyes to the people's concerns. I further note that the Dublin based developer held no public consultations with the locals as is required. At the meeting concerns were raised about the project on a wide number of issues including, the effects on protected wildlife, newly acquired health impacts reports, the whole issue of an impact on the scenery from a tourism point of view, the likelihood of drainage and water supply problems etc. I note that many of these issues are comprehensively addressed by the Appellants and I have no doubt An Bord will give them careful consideration.

As a public representative I was particularly concerned by the procedural difficulties encountered during the planning process. I was shocked at the due anger expressed over the Planning Departments handling of Further Information responses, eleven of which were returned on a technicality. Due to the concerns raised there and a formal complaint to the Co Mgr calling for a full investigation I helped organise a meeting between a representative group of those concerned and senior county planners. At the meeting it was acknowledged that there were "gaping wide open crevices" in the planning process and that the right to public participation which is central to the planning process in Ireland was seriously undermined in this case. Perhaps though more substantially there are health issues raised by the local GP regarding proximity to dwellings which cannot be glossed over. Ultimately this large scale wind farm is

too close to a major rural town and as such I don't believe a similar situation occurs anywhere else in the country. However I feel that An Bord Pleanála should take cognizance that that very proximity issue is the subject of a Seanad Bill at the moment by John Kelly which will mitigate against some of the health concerns. However, more important is the current review of the Donegal County Development Plan 2012-2018 which is out for final public review until March 30th. I would draw your attention to *Material Alteration 76* which proposes an amendment to the technical standards contained in 9.6.5(a)

this currently reads

Wind Turbines must not be located within:

a) 500m of any dwelling (except where the written consent of those persons affected by this condition is given).

Proposed amendment

Wind Turbines must not be located within:

a) 1km of any dwelling (except where the written consent of those persons affected by this condition is given).

It appears to me that when adopted the new County Development Plan would have serious implications for this application. Based on Material Alteration 76 the amended setback of 1 km would mean that the Straboy wind farm would be unable to proceed without many further consents being obtained from affected householders. Many of those affected householders have already appealed or objected to this wind farm. One has to recognise that many serious assertions have been made with respect to this particular application. As a public representative in the area I feel it is incumbent upon me to articulate a view on an issue that is of great concern to many local people. Indeed, in light of the proposed amendment above, it would appear that an utter travesty could be visited upon the local population were this application to proceed at this stage.

The matter that concerns me most is the fact that the EIS was not carried out in a manner that would allow for all the facts to be taken into account. The data was not collected during nesting and laying times of the birds. The fact that numerous verified sightings of the golden Eagle has taken place in this vicinity and not mentioned in the EIS study is also a cause of great concern.

I trust that all of these matters will now be considered as part of your deliberations and that the issues of significant importance to the local community, including the concerns that I raise here, will now be adequately and comprehensively addressed.

I enclose the €50 fee as required.

Is mise, le meas,


CLLR SEAMUS Ó DOMHNAILL
Chairman Glenties Eletoral Area.

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