

## Planning Application : Dunbeath

Proposal Description      This application by West Coast Energy is for **17** turbines - 125 metres to the tip, 90 metres diameter rotor, and 80m tower.

Planning Application Reference      05/00113/S36CA

Deadline for Objections      **7 May 2010**

Use the following form to submit an objection on-line

### Objection form

Name (Required in capitals)

Address (Required)

Town (Required)

Postcode (Required)

Email (Required)


Planning Application      Consent to construct and operate a wind farm at Dunbeath

Planning Application ref:      05/00113/S36CA

Please enter your concerns and reasons for objecting in your own words in the text box below. This will ensure that your objection is recognised and counted as an individual objection

Reasons for Objecting

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Please select as many of the items listed below which you consider are also relevant to your objection.

## Planning

- The development will impact on individual and community residential amenity, contrary to Policy G2 in the Highland Council Structure Plan.
- The development will impact on habitats, scenery and landscape, contrary to Policy G2 in the Highland Council Structure Plan.
- The development is at risk from natural hazards, especially ground instability, contrary to Policy G2 in the Highland Council Structure Plan.
- The development is not sensitively sited and is not in keeping with local character, the historical environment, or the natural environment, contrary to Policy G2 in the Highland Council Structure Plan.
- The proposal is contrary to Policy G1 in the Highland Council Structure Plan in that it will not promote and enhance the social, economic and environmental well being of the people of Dunbeath.
- The development is in an area identified as being of a high quality in terms of nature conservation, landscape, and archaeological interest and it will neither conserve nor promote the Highland Heritage, contrary to Policy G6 in the Highland Structure Plan.
- The proposal is contrary to Policy N1 in the Highland Structure Plan in that it would:  
a) have an adverse effect on the priority habitat and species defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive: b) would have an adverse impact on several Annex 1 listed species of protected birds that use the proposed site.
- The proposal is contrary to Policy L4 in the Highland Structure Plan in that it does not enhance and maintain present landscape character.
- It is contrary to the Caithness Local Plan - "The Council will seek to identify and safeguard scenic views from unsympathetic development."

## Landscape and Visual Amenity

- Dunbeath is an area of natural beauty, which is already being compromised by a 9MW windfarm 3 miles from the centre of the village. This second proposed windfarm impinges on the edge of the nearby "Area of Great Landscape Value" and, more significantly, is situated in front of this area when viewed from the North. This view, of the Scaraben and Morven summits, is the single most notable view in the open Caithness landscape of dramatic vistas. The visual and landscape impacts of the proposal would be significantly detrimental contrary to Policy G2 in the Highland Council Structure Plan.
- The effect on the landscape would be detrimental to local residents, tourists, and house prices. **Seventeen** wind turbines at 125 meters in height cannot be absorbed into the local topography in addition to the wind turbines already operational at Buolfuich, Houstry.

## **Birds**

- The Environmental Impact Assessment acknowledges the importance of the proposed site to Annex 1 birds, including Golden Eagles, Merlins and Peregrine Falcons. Wag Hill, whose Eastern flank would be entirely covered by the turbine array, is noted as a soaring area for Eagles, especially the vulnerable young birds.

## **Carbon dioxide and peat**

- Caithness and Sutherland Peatlands are the best eco-system and carbon sink in the world, twice as good as all the forests in Britain, France and Germany combined. Recent research at Durham University has discovered that peatlands, especially blanket bog, store the equivalent of Britain's CO2 emissions for the last 21 years. This is the combined output of all the power stations, all transport, commercial and domestic uses you can think of. If they are properly managed our peatlands will continue to absorb not only CO2 but also methane, which is 10 times worse than CO2. Therefore our peatlands must be saved from further development.

## **Geology, Hydrology and Peat**

- **The peat depths are between 1.5m to 1.95m. This is very deep**, especially on slopes in excess of 7% where peat slide could occur. Whatever mitigation measures are taken, the detrimental effect of bad weather cannot be controlled, putting watercourses at risk from pollution and silt blocking.
- Excavation of material from "borrow-pits", i.e. new local quarries, will add permanent scarring to the ground near the access road and tracks. Construction will permanently alter this ground: it is not physically possible to restore blanket bog. The concrete base of each turbine will remain in the ground after site restoration.

## **Archaeology**

- Dunbeath is recognised as an archaeological and historic landscape of crucial significance to the understanding of Caithness prehistory. The relationship between the settlement and ritual sites, the lower moorland slopes and the river gives an integrity to this ancient relict landscape which would be totally destroyed by a scheme of this magnitude. The assessment by the applicants that the wind farm would be "peripheral" to this landscape is patent nonsense, given its scale. Other ludicrous verbal fantasies describing the scheme are "visually permeable" and "of a transparent nature".
- This scheme should be rejected as a gross visual and audible intrusion into one of the most important relict landscapes in Europe. Archaeology is recognised as the most significant tourist draw for Caithness, and much progress has been made in recent years, to promote and improve its attraction. The untouched settings of the major prehistoric landscapes of the Eastern side of Caithness, including Dunbeath, represent the county's unique selling point in this regard. Highland Council, in their Local Plan state, in consideration of the Dunbeath landscape, along with Yarrows and Camster (both the latter under similar threat), "Measures to derive economic benefits, including interpretation facilities, should respect that the integrity and sympathetic protection of the archaeological resource is of paramount importance". (Caithness Local Plan p23, para 29)

## **Noise and Shadow Flicker**

- The effect of noise has been misrepresented in the Environmental Impact Assessment, which bases its reassurance on simple noise levels, rather than assessing the complex noise pattern emitted by the low frequency, low-level aerodynamic and mechanical sound from gearbox, turbine and blades. The noise implications of this proposal on the village of Dunbeath will be significantly detrimental, contrary to Policy G2 in the Highland Council Structure Plan.
- Infrasound can be detected at distances up to 10km from a wind turbine. Although the measurements might be small the effect on peat stability and structures within that radius is still an unknown factor, and no mitigating measures have been put forward by the developer.
- Constant exposure to noise (audible and subsonic) is known to seriously affect human health. Flicker factor and strobe effects of the blades can also cause adverse health effects and can trigger epilepsy. The flicker factor has been very troublesome at the turbines on Forss Business Park. Health effects from windpower stations have been recognized by the Welsh office for over 10 years.

## **Socio-Economic Issues**

- The cumulative impact of the existing on-shore wind turbines at Buolfruch and Causewaymire, and the off-shore wind turbines in the North Sea (Beatrice) currently impacts adversely on the local landform. A further wind generation site at Dunbeath would be severely detrimental to a small community which already carries more than its share of the national wind farm burden. The proposed Dunbeath windfarm would be a very large industrial development; dominating the village of Dunbeath and surrounding settlements. The significant long term detrimental impact on the amenity of people living nearby cannot be mitigated satisfactorily.

## **Privacy**

- I do not wish my details to be published on the Scottish Government website.

*All representations received will be published on the Scottish Government website unless you request otherwise. Please select this paragraph if you do NOT want your details published.*

**Please acknowledge receipt of this objection in writing**

*Please complete the form and send it by letter post to **Scottish Government, Energy Consents, 4th Floor, Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, GLASGOW G2 8LU** with a copy to **The Director of Planning and Development, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX***

***Thank you for taking the time to register your concerns about the proposed windfarm.***