



Campaigning for the Conservation of Wild Land in Scotland

Publisher of Scottish Wild Land News

Jane M. Meek
For and on behalf of:
SWLG Steering Committee

11th February, 2021

By e-mail to: eplanning@highland.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: 20/05073/FUL – Temporary Siting (5 years) of meteorological mast, Land 2700M East of Hilton Lodge Tomich, Cannich

OBJECTION

I write on behalf of the Steering Committee of the Scottish Wild Land Group (SWLG) to lodge our objection to the above proposal to site a temporary meteorological mast on land near Tomich by Cannich.

Please note that this objection is submitted by SWLG as a registered wild land charity and is separate from the objection submitted by me in my own name against this same planning application.

We note that the proposed mast will be 101.6 metres tall and prominently sited on high ground opposite the Glen Affric National Nature Reserve and National Scenic Area. The structure will be highly visible from far and wide, dwarfing all other structures including pylons. It will be in clear view of users of core paths and other trails in the area. This is entirely inappropriate for a location so close to Glen Affric, the glen and its approaches being internationally renowned for the quality of their landscapes and wildlife.

Although described as “slim”, the mast will require 16 steel guy wires and anchors extending outward to a radius of 60 metres to hold it in place. This not only adds to the visual impact of the structure but increases the potential threat to birdlife, with eagles and osprey among the important species known to frequent the area.



SWLG understands that the purpose of the mast is to collect data over a period of up to 5 years to help assess the suitability of the site for a 46-turbine wind farm (Fiodhag, formerly known as Fasnakyle). The mast has no other stated purpose. We feel that 5 years is a very long time for a “temporary” structure of this size and prominence to remain in place, given that the anticipated operational lifespan of a wind farm is 20 years.

The developer acknowledges that the mast itself is not a renewable energy development, but claims it should be consented because the Council’s Onshore Wind Supplementary Guidance indicates that the location is suitable for wind energy development. We disagree with the developer’s reasoning. Plans for a 6-turbine wind farm (Beinn Mhor) in this exact same area were rejected by the Scottish Government in 2015 on the grounds of site unsuitability. The footprint of rejected Beinn Mhor is contained within the boundaries of the 5000 acre site proposed for Fiodhag. A location deemed unsuitable for a small wind farm in 2015 must surely be deemed even more unsuitable for a much bigger wind farm in 2021. On this basis there can be no justification for erecting a mast of this kind.

We ask The Highland Council to reject this application.

For and on behalf of the Scottish Wild Land Group,

Yours faithfully,

Jane M. Meek
Member of the SWLG Steering Committee