



THE MOUNTAINEERING COUNCIL OF SCOTLAND

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4/9/09

Dear Sir / Madam

Section 36 Application for the proposed Aikengall II – Wester Dod Community Windfarm

Please accept these comments from the Mountaineering Council of Scotland (MCofS) on the Aikengall II – Wester Dod Community Windfarm proposals. We are recognised by the Scottish Government as the Representative Body for hill walkers, climbers and ski tourers. We have over 10,000 members and aim to represent the interests of all the 400,000 regular Scottish mountaineers on issues relevant to access to, and conservation of, Scotland's mountaineering environment.

The MCofS has some concerns about the location of the development in an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). As the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) states, these areas of special landscape character are designated in order to provide protection against inappropriate forms of development. The Scottish Government must be satisfied that the windfarm does not compromise the designation. We would contest the claim regarding the windfarm being a draw for visitors, and believe this argument should be dismissed as we are unaware, and the Environmental Statement does not claim evidence to support this claim while observing the opposite argument that the development would have a negative impact on visitors, lacks evidence.

The MCofS welcomes the recognition of open access to the area in 11.6.2, but we are concerned with the wording of the NTS that only relates public access to footpaths. This is a misconception that must be carefully guarded against, and should be made clear to contractors that the area, outside the immediate construction site, that the area is open to responsible access, and that access should not be hindered without good, and defensible reasons. For the reason of not deterring, or obstructing access, it is important the NTS reference to fences to prevent grazing should not prevent recreational access through provision of adequate crossing points.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely

Hebe Carus
Access & Conservation Officer